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SANGOKUSHI

60

THE FALL OF SHU

YOKOYAMA MITSUTERU

JIANG WEI BOYUE

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

IN 1972, I BEGAN DRAWING SANGOKUSHI. ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS WAS A NOVEL THAT I HAD READ AND FELL IN LOVE WITH IN MY YOUTH. ALTHOUGH I INITIALLY INTENDED TO AIM THIS PROJECT AT YOUNGER READERS, THE ENORMOUSLY WIDE-REACHING APPEAL OF THE TALE QUICKLY SAID OTHERWISE. AS I BECAME AWARE OF THIS MANGA'S POPULARITY AMONG ADULTS, I BEGAN TO DRAW IT WITH OLDER AUDIENCES IN MIND AS WELL.

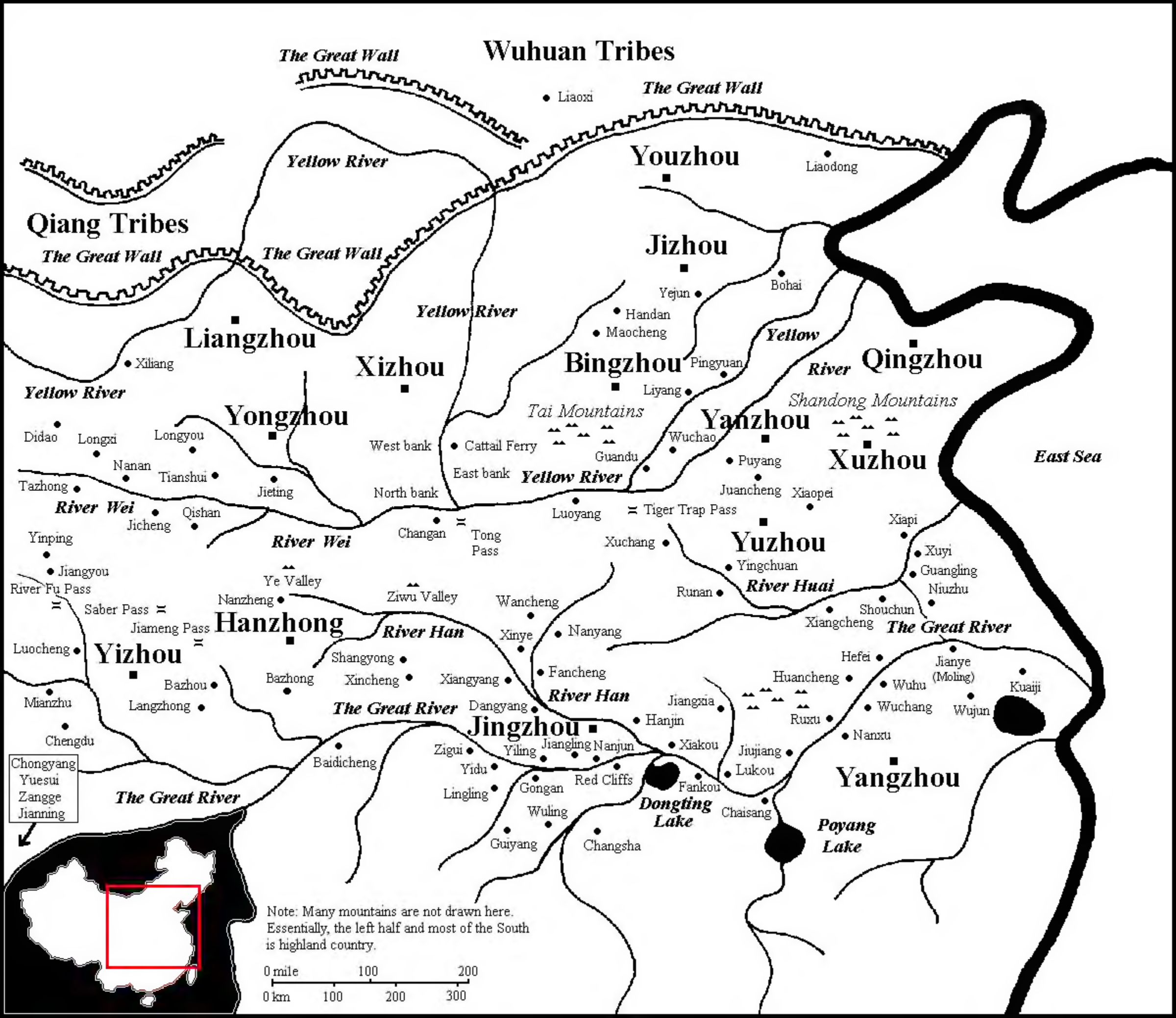
NOW AT THE TIME OF THIS PROJECT'S START, AVAILABLE ART REFERENCES FOR THE SETTING WAS QUITE POOR AS SINO-JAPANESE RELATIONS HAD NOT YET NORMALIZED, AND I THUS HAD TO RELY ON IMAGINATION ALONE AS I READ RELATED BOOKS WITHOUT ANY PICTURES. THE TASK BECAME CONSIDERABLY EASIER AROUND HALF-WAY THROUGH, WHEN MORE AND MORE ART REFERENCES BECAME AVAILABLE.

MY REMAINING REGRET IS THAT BOTH HANZHONG AND WUZHANG PLAINS WERE FORBIDDEN TO FOREIGN TOURISTS DURING THE TIME OF SANGOKUSHI'S SERIALIZATION. HOWEVER, THANKS TO A SPECIAL TV PROGRAM, I WAS ABLE TO OBTAIN PERMISSION TO VISIT HANZHONG AND SEE MT. DINGJUN AND WUHOU TEMPLE (ZHUGE LIANG'S TEMPLE) IN 1986.

IN ANY CASE, I WAS ONLY ABLE TO STICK WITH THIS PROJECT AND FINISH IT AFTER 15 YEARS DUE TO THE SUPPORT OF YOU DEAR READERS. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

– YOKOYAMA MITSUTERU –

横山光輝


Wuhuan Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Liaoxi
Youzhou
Liaodong
Yellow River
Qiang Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Jizhou
Bohai
Yejun
Handan
Maocheng
Yellow River
Liangzhou
Xizhou
Bingzhou
Pingyuan
Yellow River
Qingzhou
Xiliang
Yellow River
Liyang
Shandong Mountains
Tai Mountains
Yongzhou
Yanzhou
Didao
Longxi
Longyou
West bank
Cattail Ferry
Wuchao
Guandu
Xuzhou
East Sea
Nanan
East bank
Yellow River
Puyang
Tianshui
Tazhong
Jieting
North bank
Juancheng
Xiaopei
River Wei
Qishan
Luoyang
Tiger Trap Pass
Jicheng
Changan
Tong Pass
Xiapi
Yuzhou
Yinping
River Wei
Xuchang
Xuyi
Jiangyou
Ye Valley
Yingchuan
Guangling
River Fu Pass
Ziwu Valley
Runan
River Huai
Niuzhu
Saber Pass
Nanzheng
Wancheng
Shouchun
Jiameng Pass
Hanzhong
River Han
Xinye
Nanyang
Xiangcheng
The Great River
Luocheng
Yizhou
Shangyong
Hefei
Jianye (Moling)
Fancheng
Huancheng
Bazhou
Bazhong
Xincheng
Xiangyang
Wuhu
Kuaiji
River Han
Jiangxia
Mianzhu
Langzhong
The Great River
Dangyang
Wuchang
Wujun
Ruxu
Hanjin
Jingzhou
Chengdu
Nanxu
Zigui
Yiling
Jiangling
Nanjun
Xiakou
Jiujiang
Baidicheng
Yidu
Lukou
Yangzhou
Chongyang
Yuesui
Zangge
Jianning
Red Cliffs
Fankou
Gongan
Lingling
Dongting Lake
Chaisang
Wuling
Poyang Lake
Guiyang
Changsha
The Great River
Note: Many mountains are not drawn here.
Essentially, the left half and most of the South
is highland country.
0 mile 100 200
0 km 100 200 300

SANGOKUSHI (ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS)

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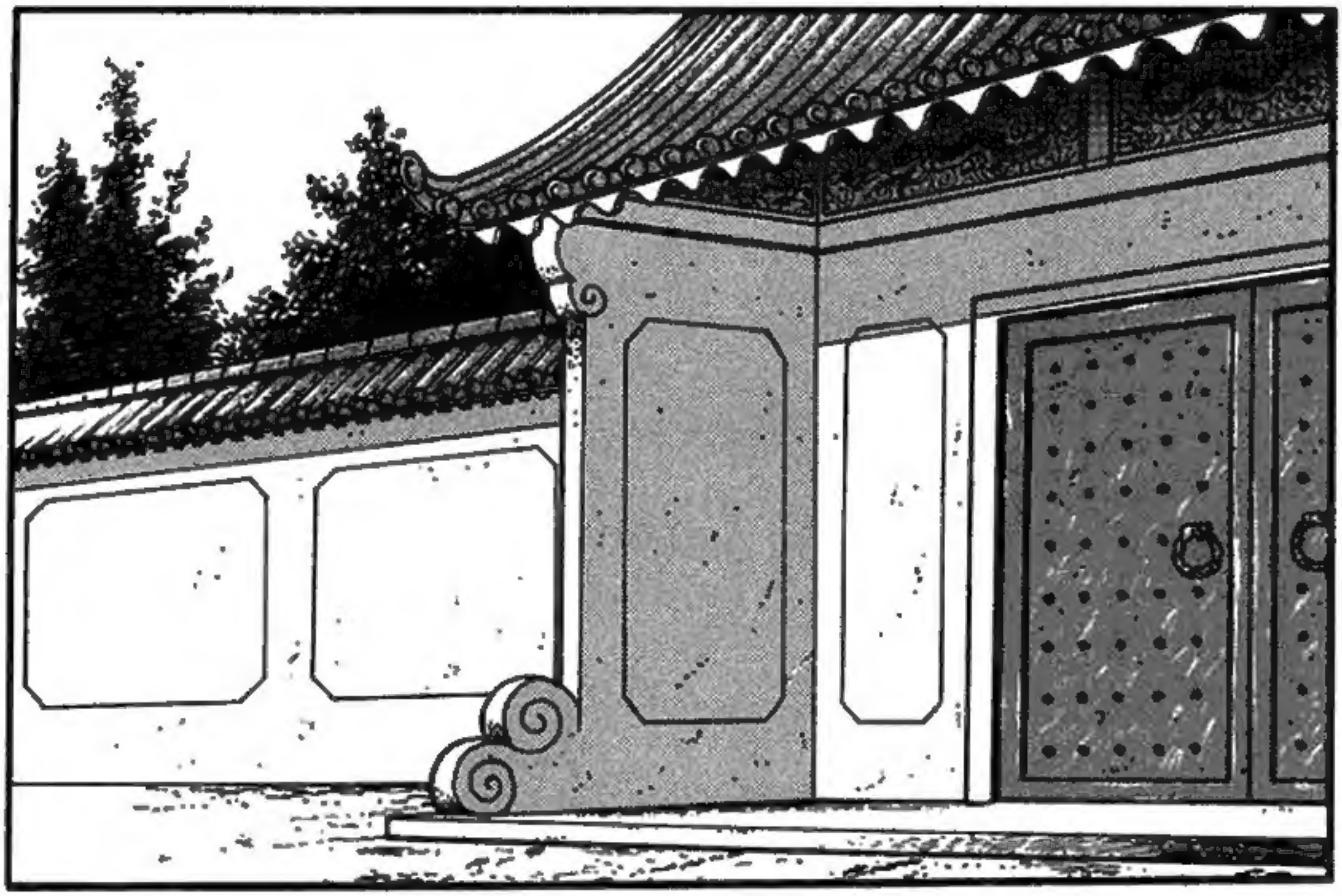
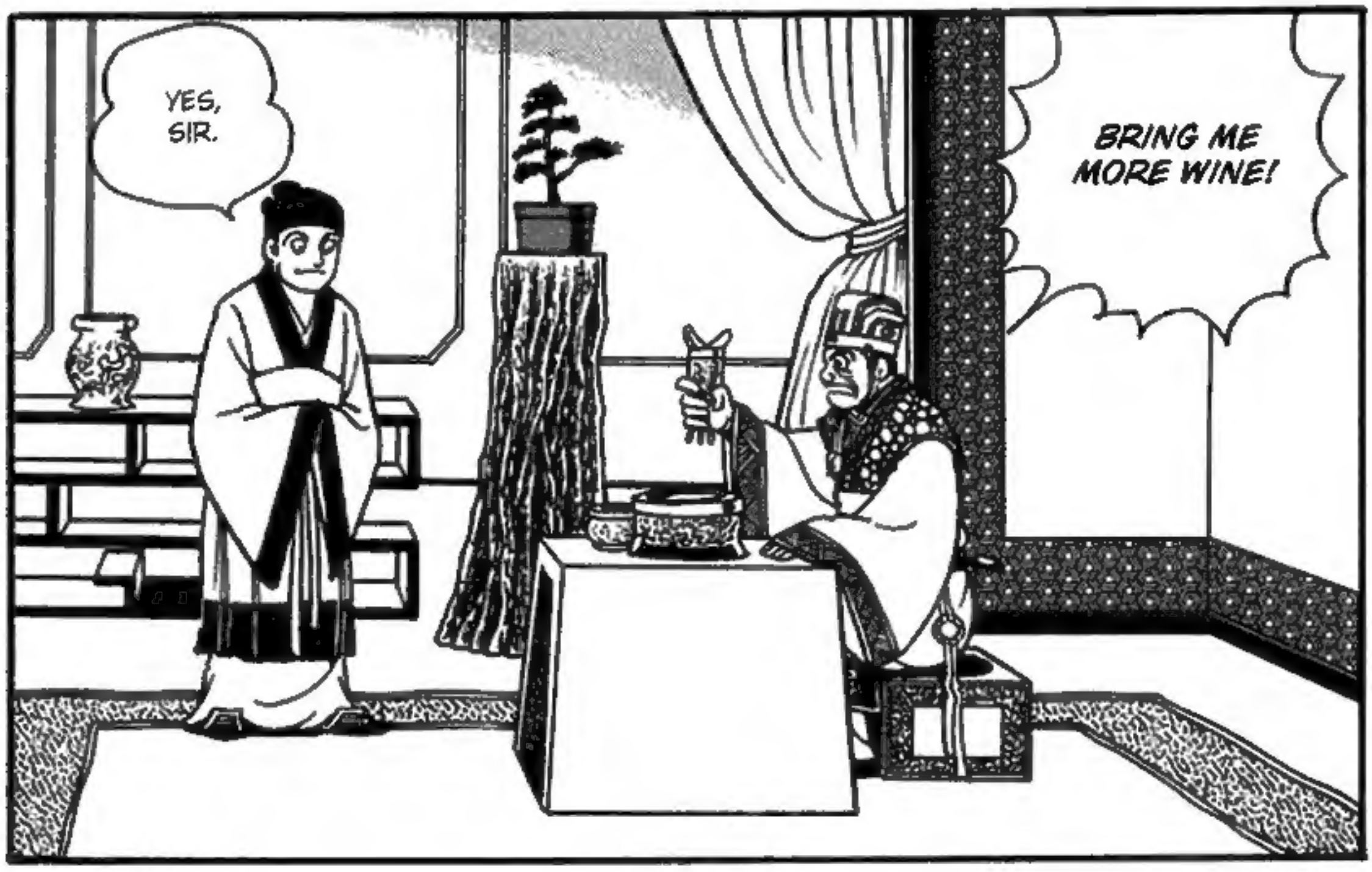
YANG YI'S DEATH





HOW CAN I *NOT* DRINK!?

MIGHT SIR BE NOT DRINKING A LITTLE TOO MUCH?

YOU'RE DAMN RIGHT!
IS SOMETHING THE MATTER, MASTER?

I SHOULD'VE BEEN THE NEXT CHANCELLOR!

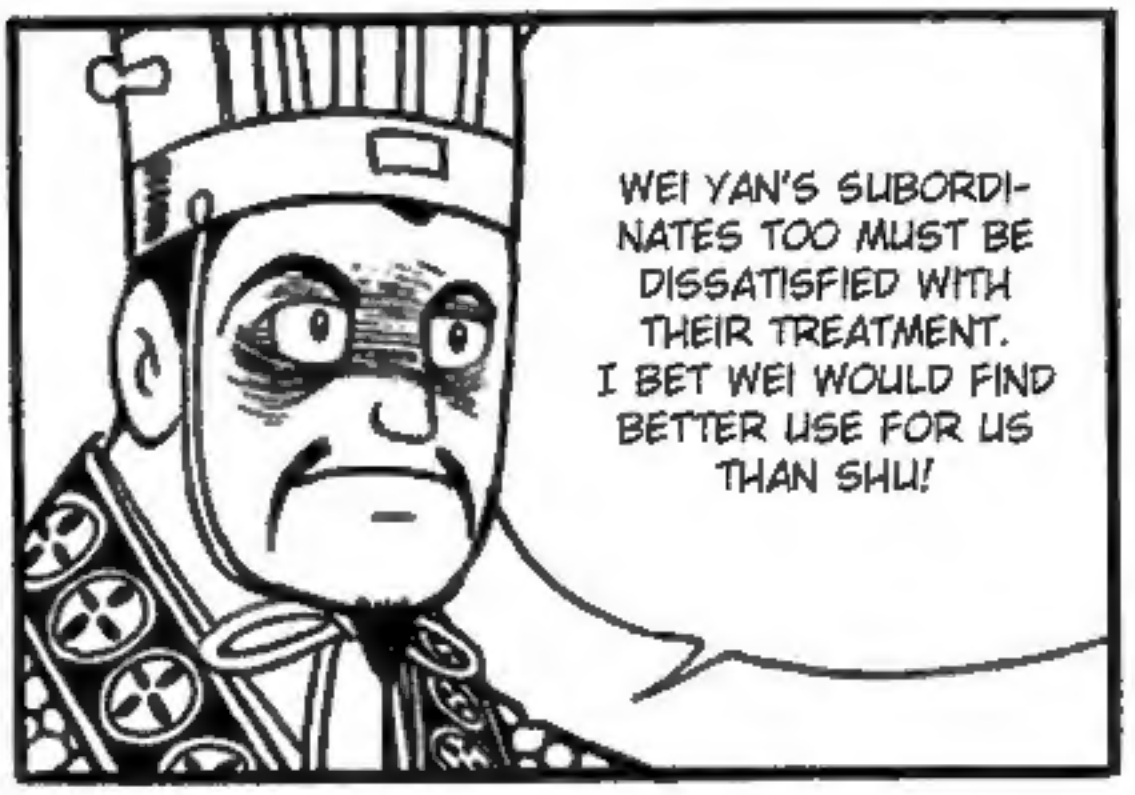
NOT ONLY HAVE I SERVED THE EMPEROR LONGER THAN JIANG WAN, BUT FOR YEARS, I AIDED THE FORMER CHANCELLOR DUTIFULLY OUT ON THE FRONTLINES! HOW CAN HE BETRAY ME BY NAMING JIANG WAN AS HIS SUCCESSOR!?

RIGHT, SIR.

IT WAS *ME* WHO BROUGHT OUR TROOPS SAFELY BACK TO HANZHONG! IT WAS ***ME*** WHO PUT DOWN WEI YAN AND HIS REBELLION!

WANG PING, ZHANG YI, AND ZHANG NI, AND OTHER OFFICERS TOO MUST FEEL RESENTMENT THAT THEY WERE NOT REWARDED APPROPRIATELY.

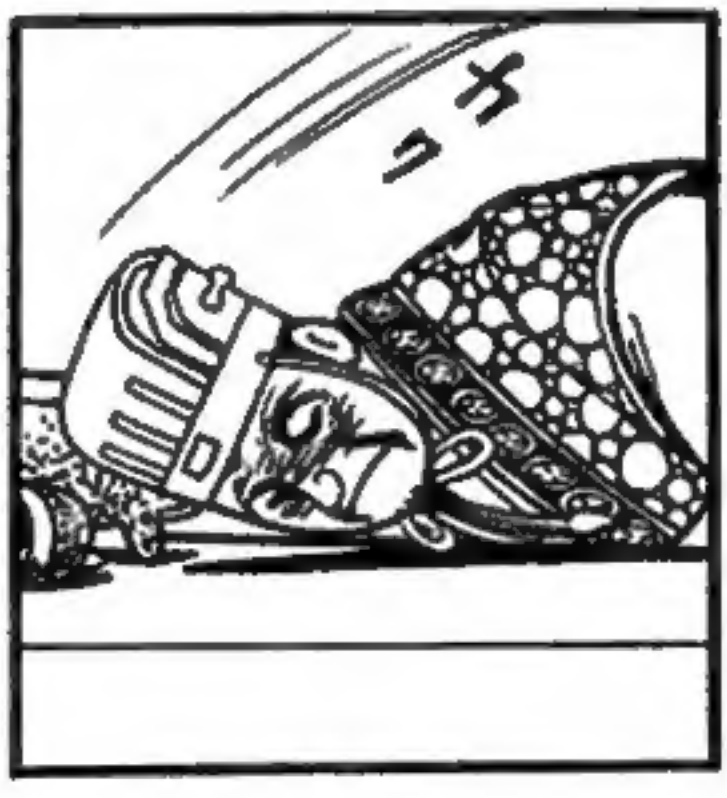
I REBUKED WEI YAN WHEN HE REFUSED TO TAKE ORDERS FROM ME... HOW IRONIC IT IS THAT THE ONE WHO PUT AN END TO WEI YAN NOW UNDERSTANDS HIS FEELINGS BETTER THAN ANYONE!


WEI YAN'S SUBORDI-
NATES TOO MUST BE
DISSATISFIED WITH
THEIR TREATMENT.
I BET WEI WOULD FIND
BETTER USE FOR US
THAN SHU!

Y-YES,
SIR.
I SAID
POUR ME
ANOTHER!

ZZZZ...

MNN...



FEI YI'S RESIDENCE

YES, BUT I MUST POINT OUT HE WAS HEAVILY INTOXICATED. I DO NOT KNOW IF THEY WERE MERELY DRUNKEN RAMBLES OR SINCERE REMARKS...

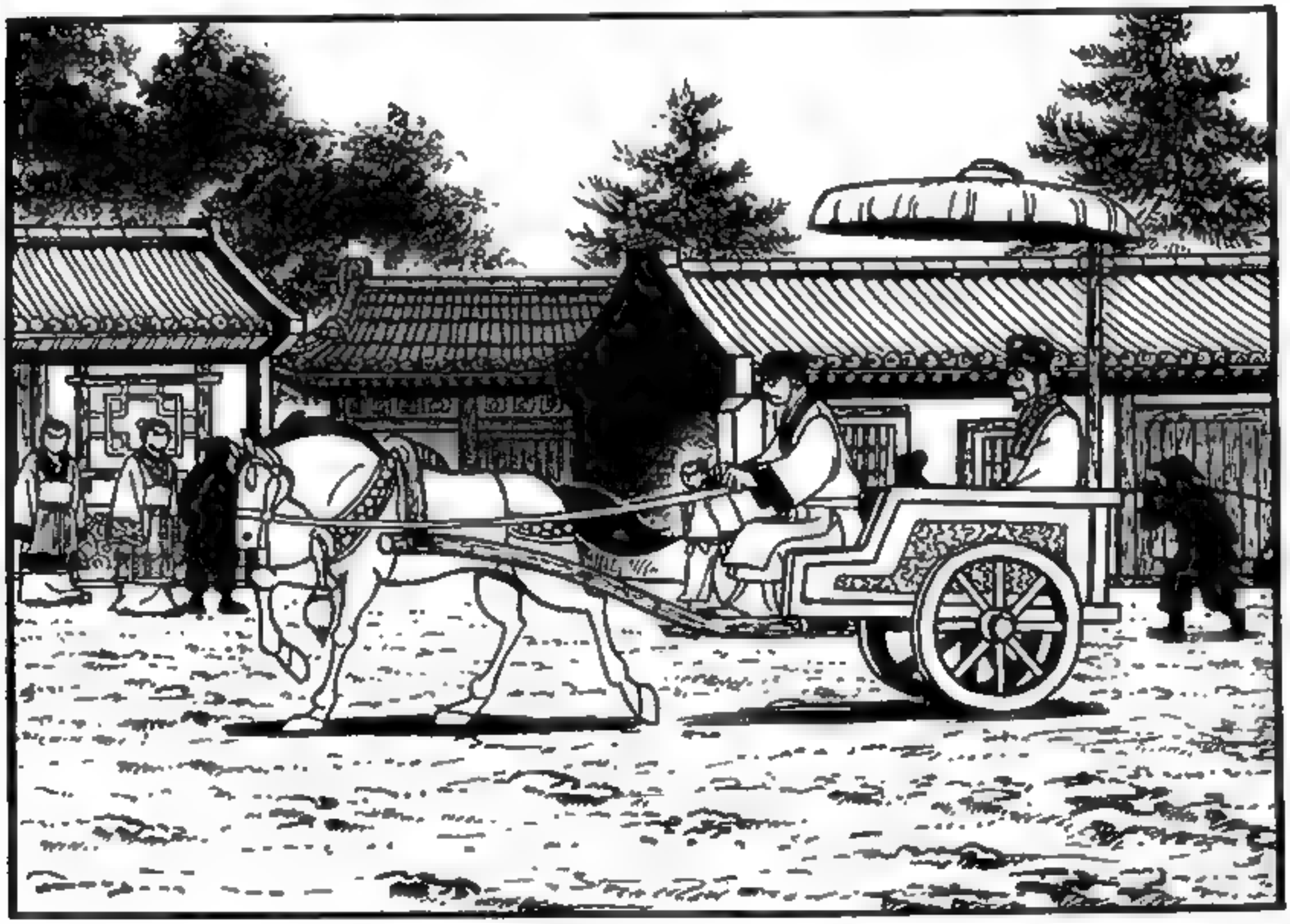
WHAT!? YANG YI BITTERLY COMPLAINED ABOUT HIS CURRENT STATUS AND EVEN FANCIED THE IDEA OF DEFECTING TO WEI!?

YES, SIR.

HMM... WELL IN ANY CASE, THANK YOU FOR INFORMING ME. HERE IS A REWARD.

I HAVE A DUTY TO REPORT THIS TO THE EMPEROR.

DRUNKEN RAMBLES OR NOT, THIS IS A VERY SERIOUS MATTER. DEFECTORS TO WEI IN THIS TIME OF VULNER-ABILITY WILL LEAD TO SHU'S RUIN.



YES, YOUR MAJESTY.

YANG YI HARBOURS THOUGHTS ABOUT DEFECTING TO WEI!?

I CANNOT FORGIVE THIS OFFENSE EVEN IF HE WERE DRUNK! UNITY AND COOPERATION ARE MORE IMPORTANT NOW THAN EVER, WHAT WITH THE CHANCELLOR'S PASSING!

HIS BOTTLED-UP RESENTMENT AND FRUSTRATION WAS LET LOOSE AFTER DRINKING HEAVILY.

IT MUST BE ADMITTED THAT YANG YI CAN BE RASH AND NARROW-MINDED AT TIMES. TRUE, IT IS OFTEN SAID THAT WEI YAN POSSESSED A NATURALLY REBELLIOUS HEART,

I TOO, FEAR IF NOTHING IS DONE, HE MAY ONE DAY ACT UPON THESE PENT-UP THOUGHTS.

HMM...

BUT IT WAS YANG YI WHO POINTED OUT EVERY ONE OF WEI YAN'S MISDEMEANORS TO KONGMING, WHICH MAY HAVE WIDENED THE DRIFT BETWEEN WEI YAN AND KONGMING.

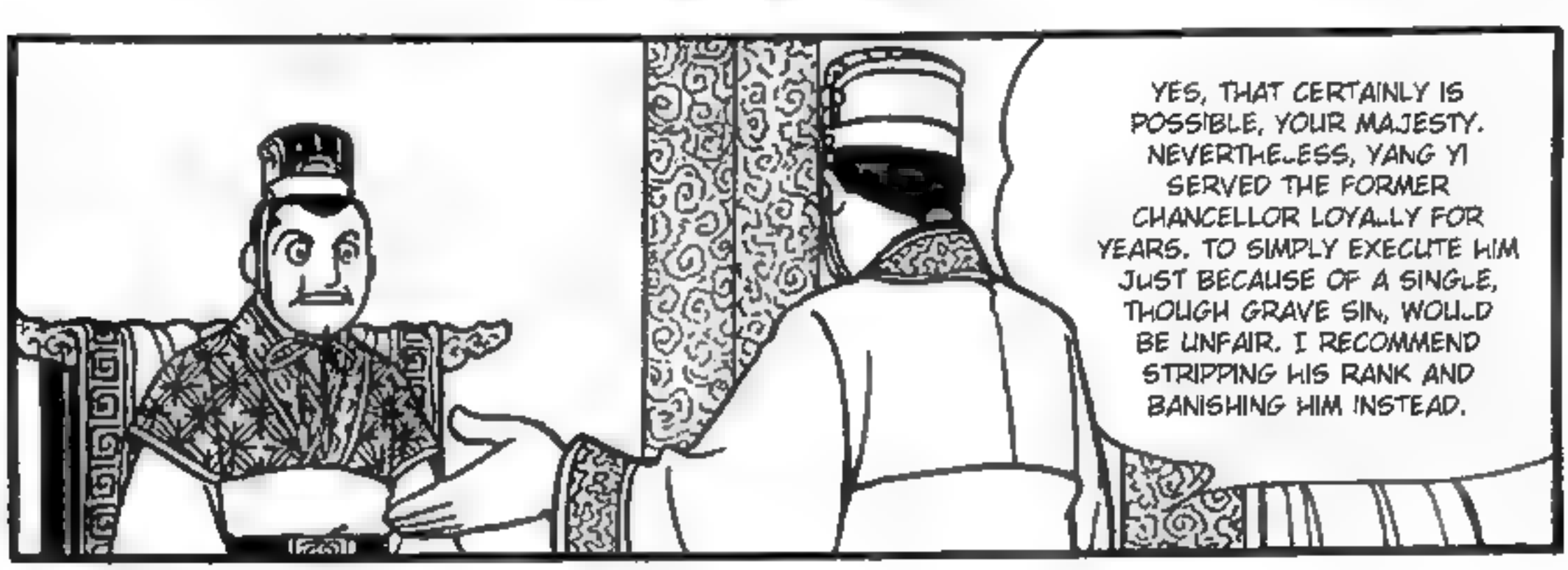
YES, SIR.

I ORDER YANG YI'S EXECUTION! IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THERE IS A CLEAR RISK THAT HE MAY GATHER INDIVIDUALS FRUSTRATED WITH THEIR CURRENT LOT AND THROW OUR EMPIRE INTO PANIC.

WHAT IS IT, JIANG WAN?

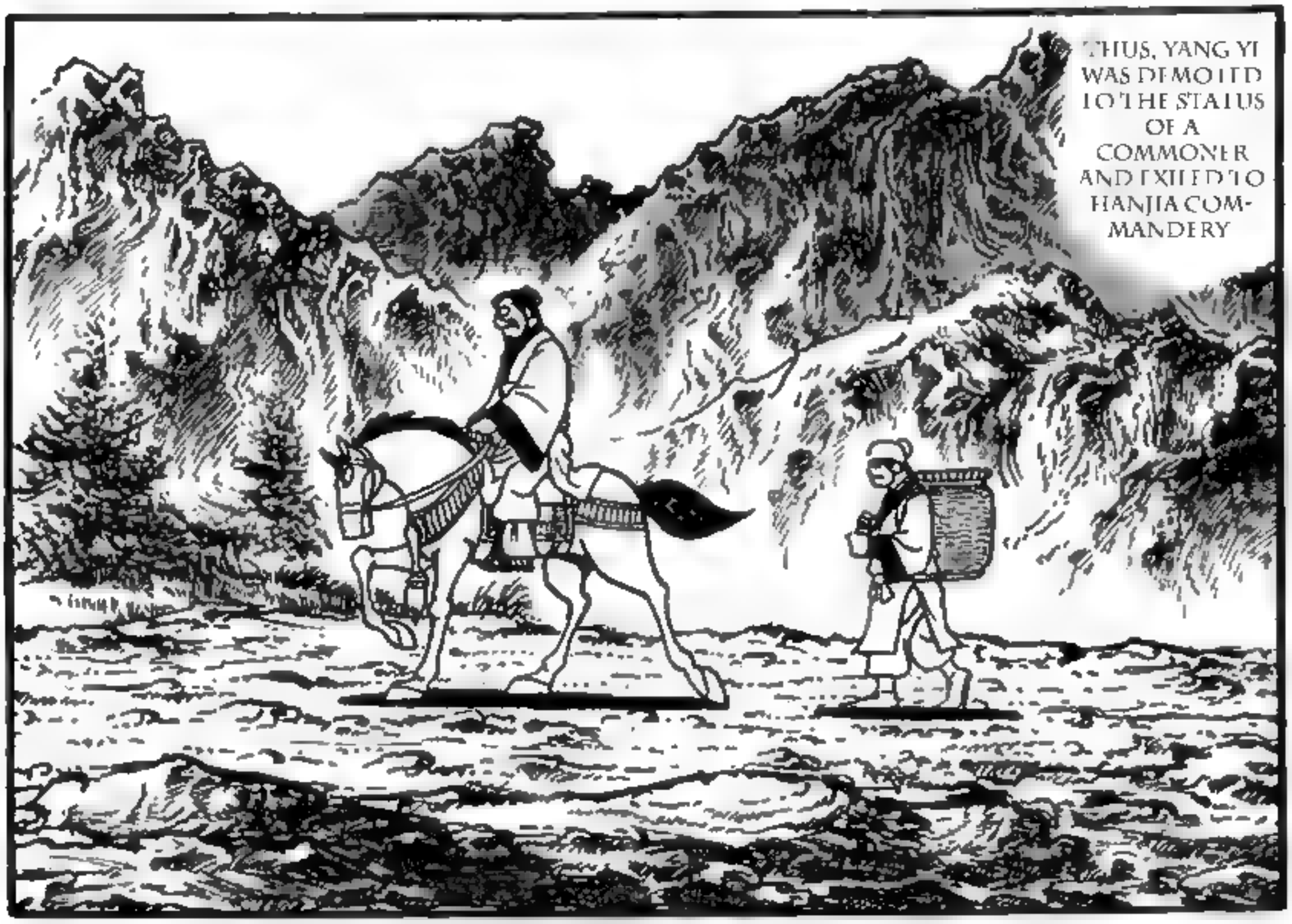
WAIT!

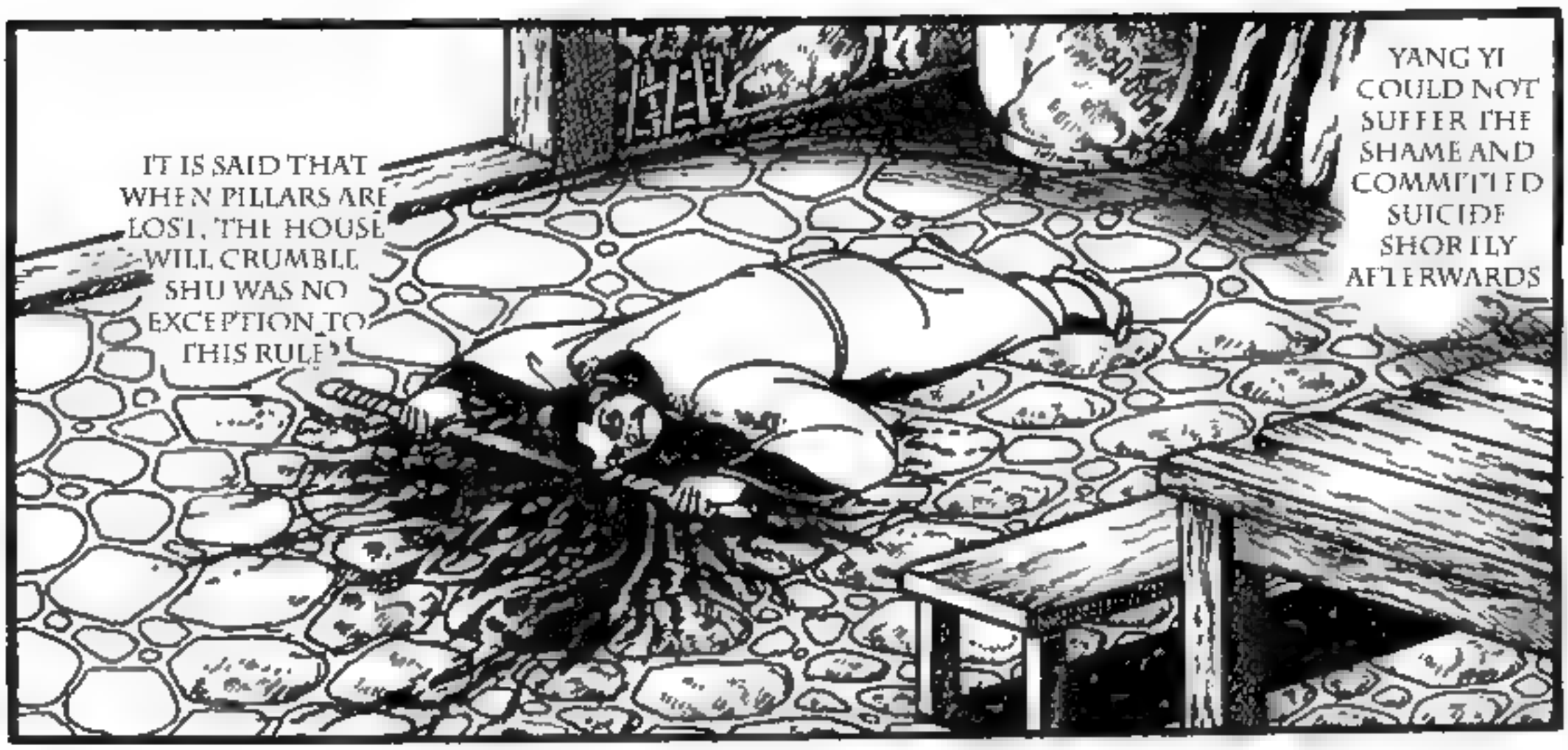
YES, BUT IS IT NOT ALSO SAID THAT WINE CAN LET TRUE DESIRES SLIP FROM TIGHT-LIPS?
YANG YI DID INDEED SAY TREASONOUS REMARKS, BUT WE MUST REMEMBER HE WAS HEAVILY INTOXICATED AT THE TIME!


YES, THAT CERTAINLY IS POSSIBLE, YOUR MAJESTY. NEVERTHELESS, YANG YI SERVED THE FORMER CHANCELLOR LOYALLY FOR YEARS. TO SIMPLY EXECUTE HIM JUST BECAUSE OF A SINGLE, THOUGH GRAVE SIN, WOULD BE UNFAIR. I RECOMMEND STRIPPING HIS RANK AND BANISHING HIM INSTEAD.

THANK YOU.
VERY WELL, I WILL DO AS YOU RECOMMEND, JIANG WAN.

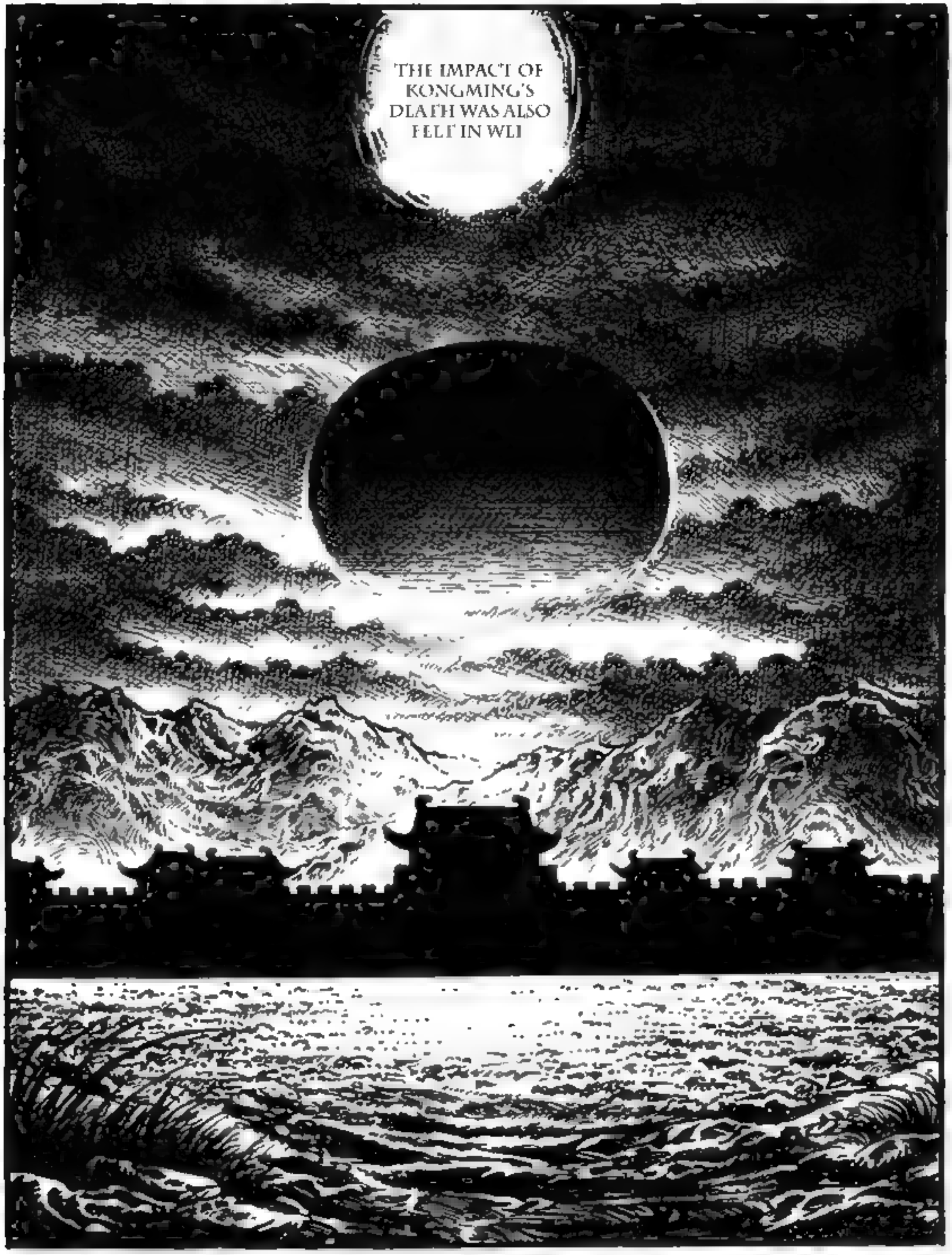
HMM. TRUE, IF I DO THAT, HE WILL NOT BE OF ANY THREAT TO ME AND WEI WOULD NOT TAKE HIM SERIOUSLY EITHER.


THUS, YANG YI WAS DEMOTED TO THE STATUS OF A COMMONER AND EXILED TO HANJIA COMMANDERY

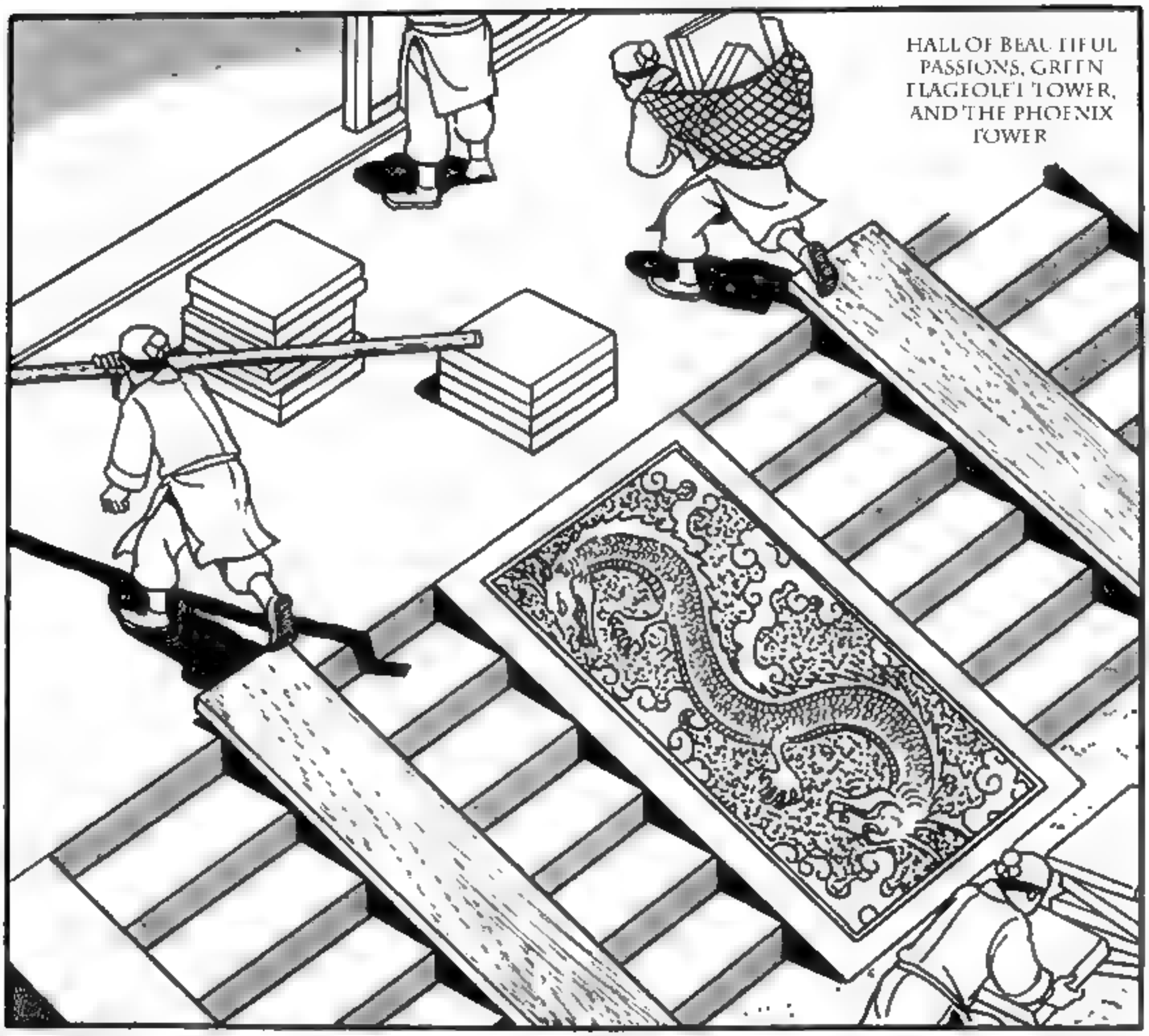

IT IS SAID THAT WHEN PILLARS ARE LOST, THE HOUSE WILL CRUMBLE. SHU WAS NO EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE.
YANG YI COULD NOT SUFFER THE SHAME AND COMMITTED SUICIDE SHORTLY AFTERWARDS

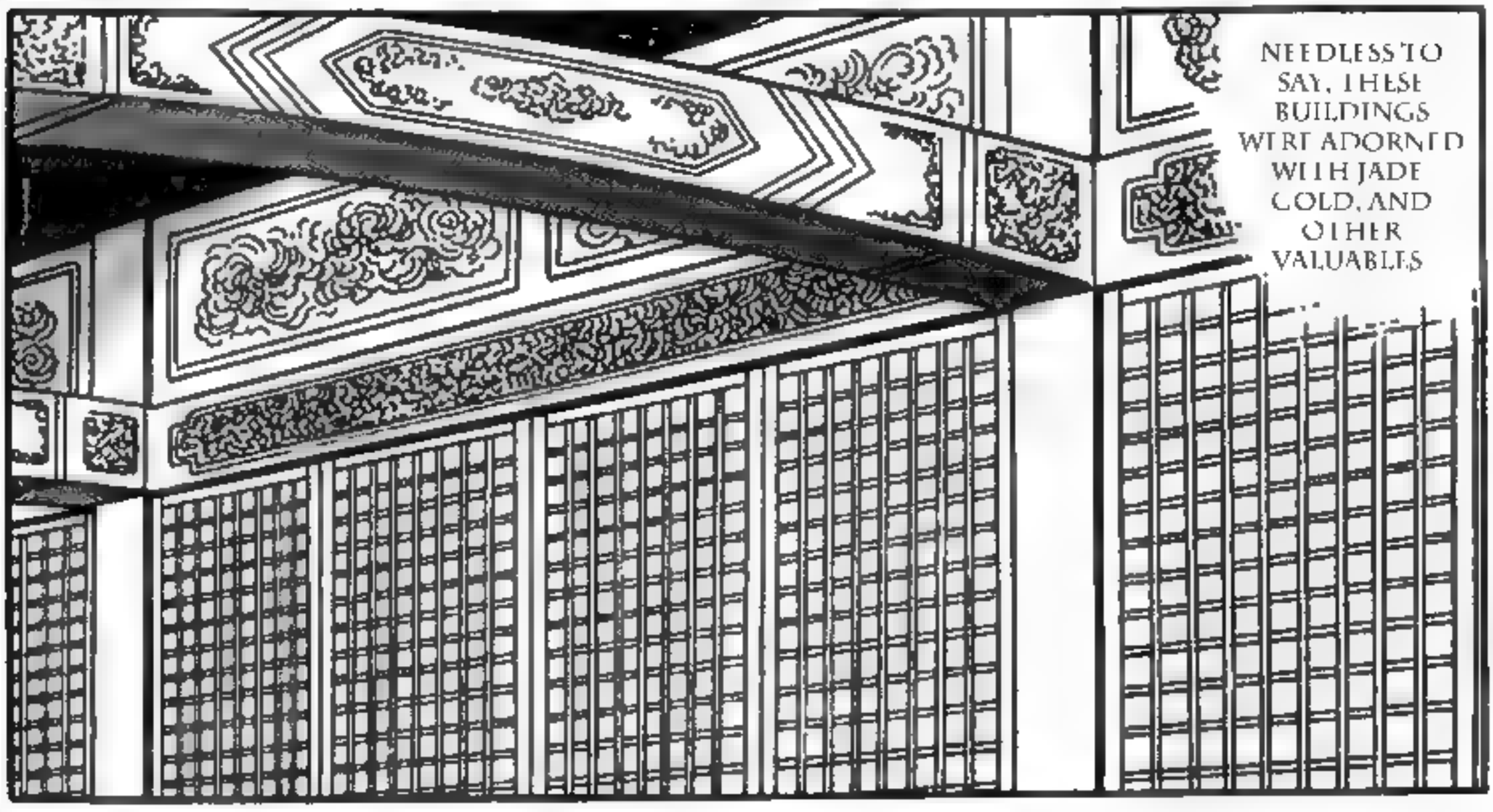
FOR THE TIME BEING, SHU CEASED ALL MILITARY CAMPAIGNS AND FOCUSED ON INTERNAL STABILITY.

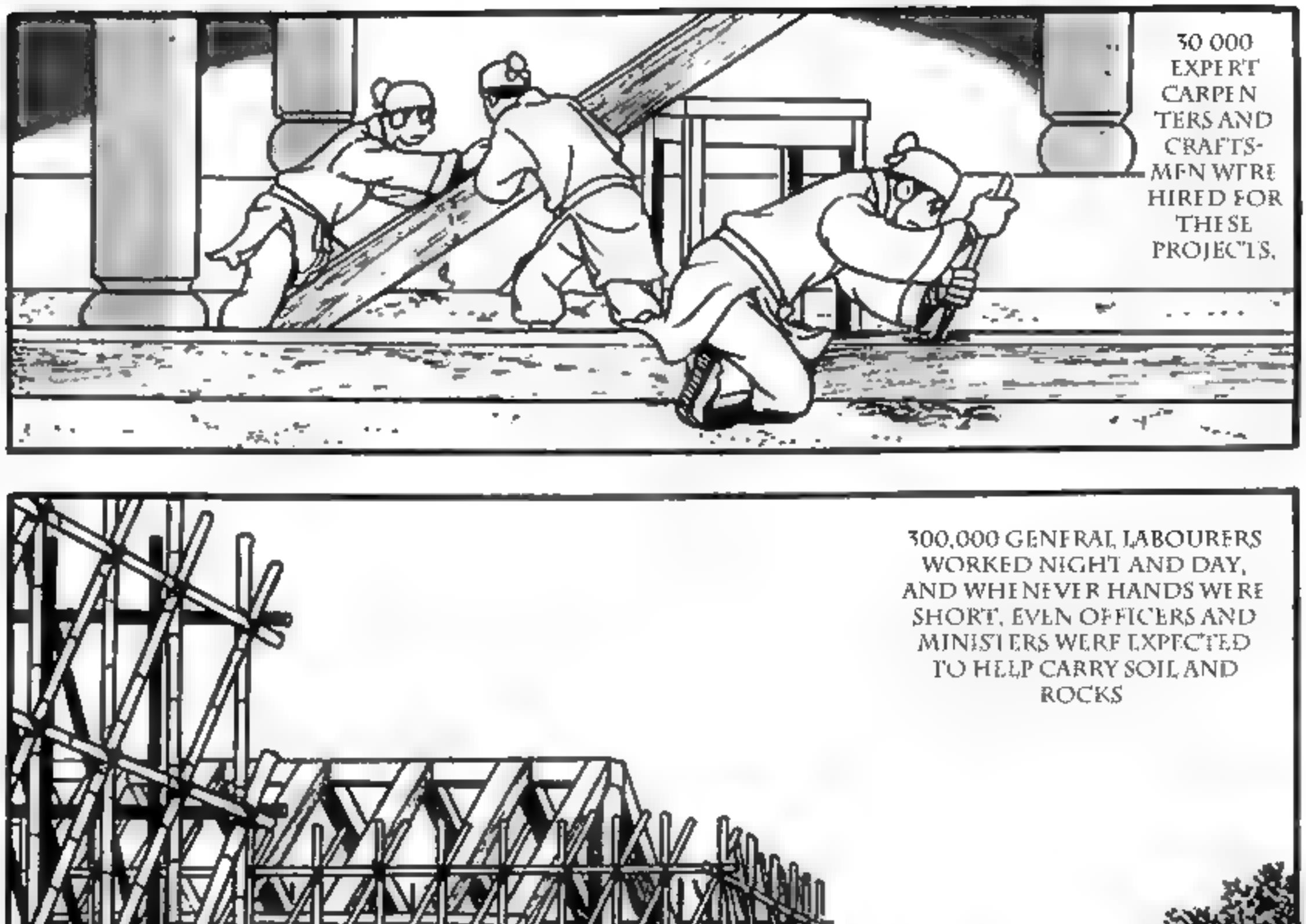
POWER STRUGGLE



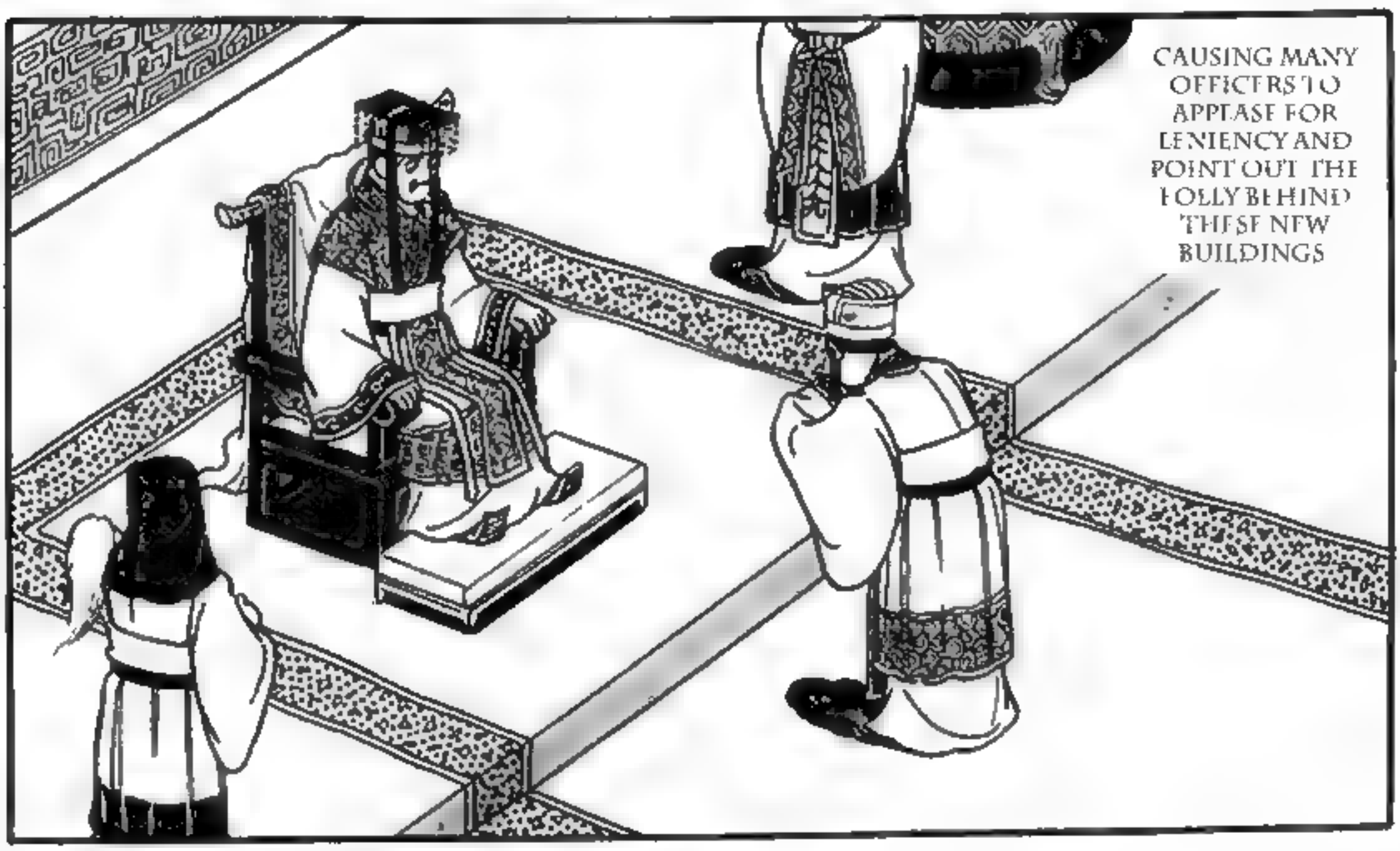
THE WEI EMPEROR CAO RUI, RELIEVED UPON HEARING KONGMING'S DEATH, NOW SPENT HIS ENERGIES ON BUILDING NEW PALACES
AT LUOYANG, HE ORDERED THE CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE HALL OF SUNRISE, HALL OF THE FIRMAMENT, HALL OF COMPLETE PATTERNS


HALL OF BEAUTIFUL PASSIONS, GREEN FLAGEOLET TOWER, AND THE PHOENIX TOWER


NEEDLESS TO SAY, THESE BUILDINGS WERE ADORNED WITH JADE GOLD, AND OTHER VALUABLES


30 000 EXPERT CARPENTERS AND CRAFTSMEN WERE HIRED FOR THESE PROJECTS.
300,000 GENERAL LABOURERS WORKED NIGHT AND DAY, AND WHENEVER HANDS WERE SHORT, EVEN OFFICERS AND MINISTERS WERE EXPECTED TO HELP CARRY SOIL AND ROCKS

THE PEOPLE'S RESENTMENT FOR THESE EXTRAVAGANT PROJECTS WERE NOT SMALL.


CAUSING MANY OFFICERS TO APPEASE FOR LENIENCY AND POINT OUT THE FOLLY BEHIND THESE NEW BUILDINGS

BUT ALL WHO OPPOSED WERE PROMPTLY EXECUTED

CAO RUI EVEN DISPLAYED A GIGANTIC CAULDRON OF BOILING OIL TO SERVE AS A WARNING TO ANY OTHER DISSENTERS

MANY MEN SOON TURNED TO SIMA YI FOR HELP

IT SEEMS HE'S TRICKED HIMSELF INTO BELIEVING HE'S PACIFIED THE WHOLE REALM NOW THAT KONGMING IS GONE...

WERE KONGMING STILL ALIVE, HIS MAJESTY WOULD NOT HAVE DARED TO DO SUCH THINGS.

HOWEVER, THE LIKES OF JIANG WAN, FEI YI, AND JIANG WEI ARE STILL SERVING SHU. ALTHOUGH SHU IS CONTENT TO SIT BACK AND BUILD UP ITS STRENGTH FOR NOW, THEY MAY ONCE AGAIN DECIDE TO INVADE OUR LANDS.

AS LONG AS LOYAL AND ABLE MINISTERS SUCH AS YOU EXIST, WEI WILL HAVE A FUTURE. THUS, I ADVISE YOU TO REFRAIN FROM ANY ACTIONS THAT WILL BUY THE IRE OF HIS MAJESTY AND COST YOU YOUR HEADS.

IF MEN LIKE YOU DEFIANTLY WALK TOWARDS DEATH, SHU AND WU WOULD ONLY BENEFIT.

WHAT!? THEN ARE WE TO JUST LET THIS HAPPEN!?

VERY WELL, SIR.

AS THE EMPEROR CANNOT BE PERSUADED WITH WORDS ALONE FOR THE TIME BEING, I ADVISE YOU TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELVES SO YOU CAN AT LEAST RENDER SERVICE TO THE EMPIRE.

IT SEEMS WEI'S FUTURE WILL BE A TROUBLED ONE...

IN TROUBLED TIMES WITH A DISAFFECTED POPULACE A REBELLION IS INEVITABLE GONGSUN YUAN OF LIAODONG SOON PROVED THIS RULE

IN THE 3RD YEAR AFTER KONGMING'S PASSING, GONGSUN YUAN RAISED AN ARMY OF 150,000 IN LIAODONG AND AIMED TO TOPPLE WEI

FEAR NOT, YOUR MAJESTY. AN ARMY OF 40,000 IS ALL I REQUIRE TO PUT DOWN THIS REBELLION.

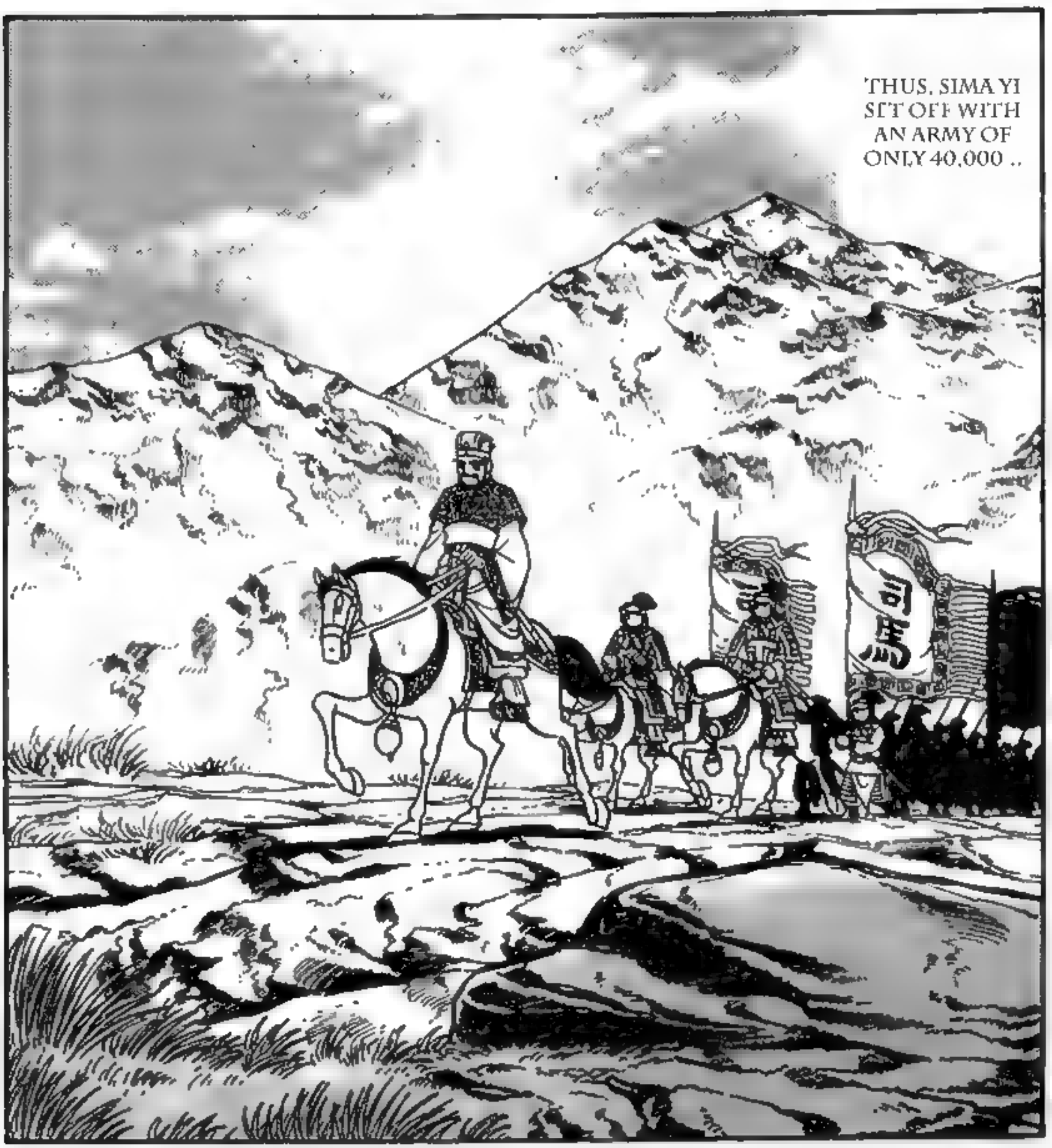
GONGSUN YUAN HAS RAISED HIS FLAG IN REBELLION AND HIS ARMY IS ADVANCING UNOPPOSED TOWARDS HERE, SACKING MANY TOWNS AND CITIES ALONG THE WAY. MOST OF OUR ARMY IS STILL NEEDED AT OUR BORDERS TO DEFEND AGAINST SHU AND WU. WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST, SIMA YI?

KONGMING THREATENED OUR 300,000-STRONG ARMY WITH ONLY 100,000 FOR MANY YEARS.

40,000!? BUT THEY NUMBER 150,000!

VERY WELL. DEPART AT ONCE AND PUT DOWN THIS REBELLION!

BECAUSE, YOU SEE, WARS ARE WON NOT WITH NUMBERS BUT WITH SUPERIOR TACTICS AND STRATEGY. 40,000 WILL BE MORE THAN ENOUGH AGAINST GONGSUN YUAN.


THUS, SIMA YI SET OFF WITH AN ARMY OF ONLY 40,000 ..

EVEN SO, SIMA YI HANDILY BEAT GONGSUN YUAN'S LARGER ARMY IN LITTLE TIME. IT WAS A SIMPLE AFFAIR FOR A MAN WHO HAD SPENT YEARS BATTLING KONGMING.

SIMA YI TRIUMPHANTLY MARCHED BACK TO LUOYANG.

HIS MAJESTY IS GRAVELY ILL!?

I HAD NOT HEARD, FOR I WAS BUSY PUTTING DOWN THE REBELLION. MAY I SEE HIS MAJESTY?

YES, HIS SICKNESS STARTED A MONTH AGO, AND HIS HEALTH HAS ONLY WORSENED SINCE THEN. THE DOCTORS FEAR HE WILL PASS AWAY ANY DAY NOW...

YES, OF COURSE. HIS MAJESTY ALSO EAGERLY WISHES TO SEE YOU.

SIMA YI? PLEASE COME CLOSER...

YOUR MAJESTY, SIMA YI HAS RETURNED TO THE CAPITAL AND WISHES TO SPEAK WITH YOU.

RIGHT.

PLEASE GO IN, SIR.

SIMA YI, I FEAR I HAVE LITTLE TIME LEFT.

YES, I'VE HEARD THE REPORTS...

LIAODONG IS PACIFIED AND THE REBEL GONGSUN YUAN IS NO MORE, YOUR MAJESTY.

YOU MUST NOT LOSE HOPE, YOUR MAJESTY.

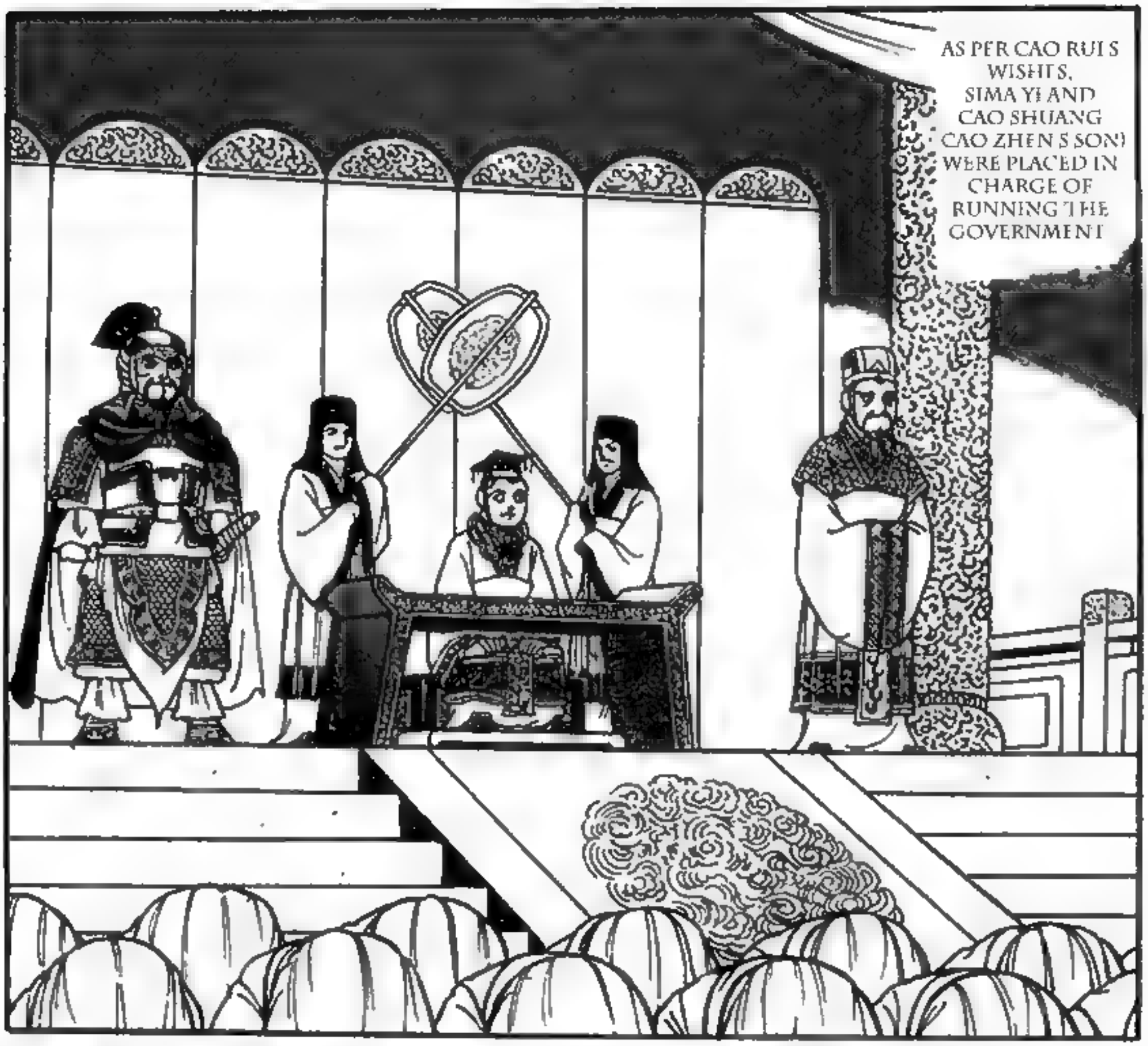
MY ONLY CONCERN IS FOR MY 8 YEAR OLD SUCCESSOR, CAO FANG. HE IS TOO YOUNG TO UNDERSTAND GOVERNMENT.

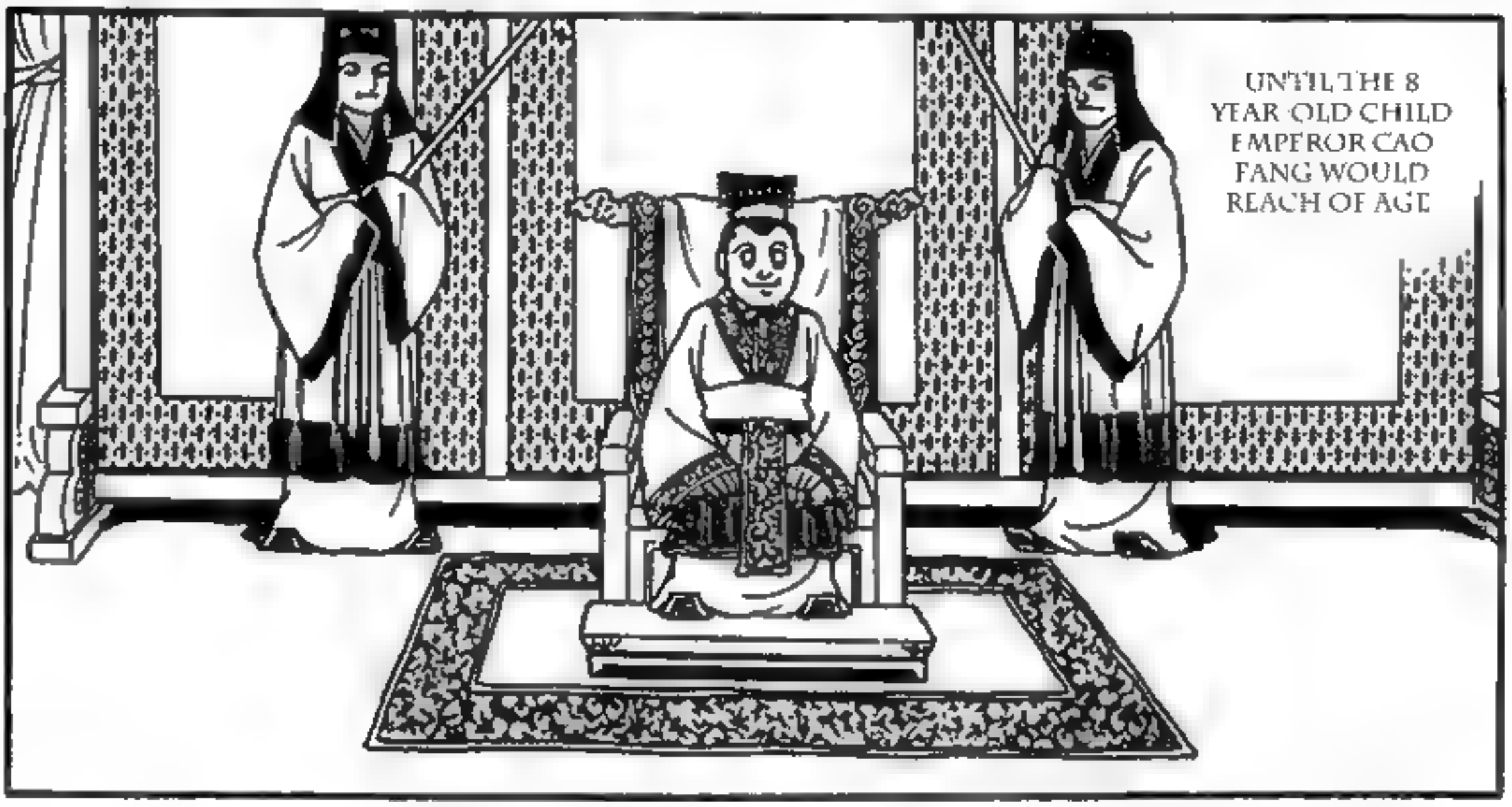
NONE OF THE DOCTORS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CURE ME. I KNOW MY END IS NEAR.

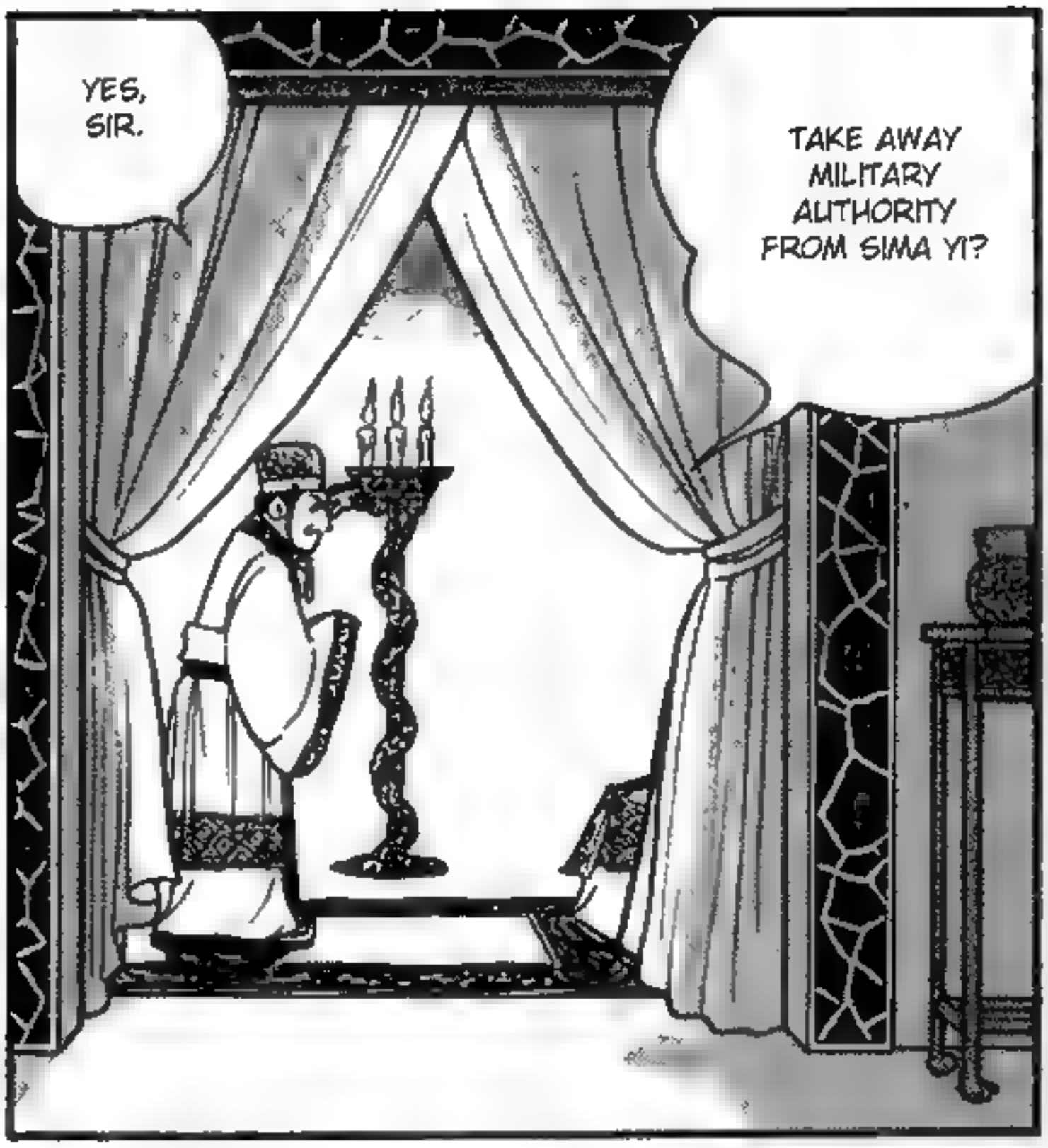
PLEASE HAVE FAITH THAT YOU CAN OVERCOME YOUR SICKNESS, YOUR MAJESTY.

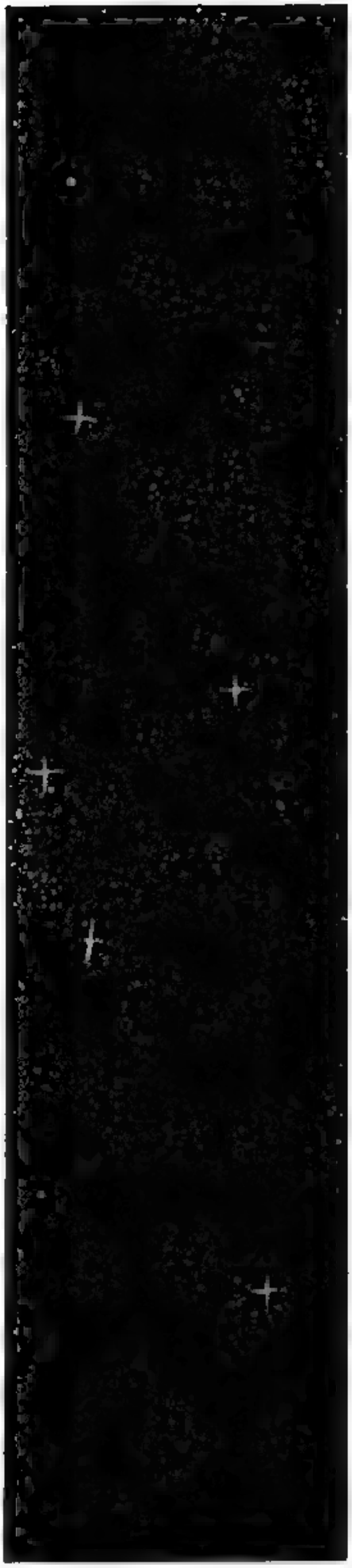
I WANT YOU AND CAO SHUANG TO CAREFULLY LOOK AFTER HIM.

THANK YOU. A GREAT BURDEN IS LIFTED FROM ME.
...YES, YOUR MAJESTY.
JUST PROMISE ME... I CANNOT REST IN PEACE UNTIL I HEAR YOU SAY YES.
SEVERAL DAYS LATER, CAO RUI DREW HIS LAST BREATH. IT WAS A SUDDEN DEATH THAT NONE COULD HAVE PREDICTED A YEAR BEFORE


AS PER CAO RUI'S WISHES, SIMA YI AND CAO SHUANG CAO ZHEN'S SON) WERE PLACED IN CHARGE OF RUNNING THE GOVERNMENT


UNTIL THE 8 YEAR OLD CHILD EMPEROR CAO FANG WOULD REACH OF AGE


YES, SIR.
TAKE AWAY MILITARY AUTHORITY FROM SIMA YI?



YES, I AM AWARE OF THAT, SIR.
BUT EMPEROR MING (CAO RUI) ASKED SIMA YI AND I TO SHARE POWER EQUALLY AS REGENTS FOR HIS SON.

HMM...

BUT YOU MUST UNDERSTAND WHAT A CUNNING MAN SIMA YI IS. IF TOO MUCH POWER IS GIVEN TO HIM, WHO'S TO SAY HE MAY NOT TRY TO USURP THE THRONE?

RECALL DURING KONGMING'S INVASIONS HOW SIMA YI BESTED YOUR LATE FATHER AND BECAME THE PREEMINENT COMMANDER IN ALL OF WEI. I'M AFRAID YOU WILL NOT STAND A CHANCE AGAINST HIM, IF HE HARBOURS SINISTER AMBITIONS.

BUT THEN I WOULD BE ACTING AGAINST EMPEROR MING'S WISHES, WOULD I NOT?

MOREOVER, HIS SONS, SHI AND ZHAO, ARE VERY TALENTED YOUNG MEN. THE SIMA CLAN SIMPLY POSES TOO MUCH OF A THREAT TO WEI'S FUTURE. YOU MUST TAKE POWER AWAY FROM THEM NOW OR IT WILL BE TOO LATE.

I HAVE JUST THE PLAN TO CIRCUM-VENT THAT. YOU SHOULD APPOINT SIMA YI AS GRAND TUTOR.

AH, I SEE! PROMOTE HIM TO GRAND TUTOR, HMM...

THE GRAND TUTOR IS THE ONE OVERSEEING THE EMPEROR'S EDUCATION AND IS THUS THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS POSITION SO NONE CAN CLAIM IT WOULD BE A DEMOTION. BUT IN REALITY, IT HAS NO REAL POLITICAL OR MILITARY POWER.

GRAND TUTOR!?

YES, THE IMPERIAL CAO CLAN'S SAFETY WILL BE SECURED WITH THAT.

YES, I WILL CONVINCE HIS MAJESTY TO DO SO FIRST THING TOMORROW.

YES, YOUR MAJESTY.

APPOINT SIMA YI AS THE GRAND TUTOR?

OH, HE WILL?

SIMA YI WILL BE PLEASED BY SUCH A PROMOTION.

?

SURE.

ALL I REQUIRE IS YOUR SEAL OF APPROVAL.

GRAND TUTOR?

SIMA YI, FOR THE YEARS OF GREAT MERIT AND SERVICE YOU HAVE RENDERED, HIS MAJESTY APPOINTS YOU AS HIS GRAND TUTOR!

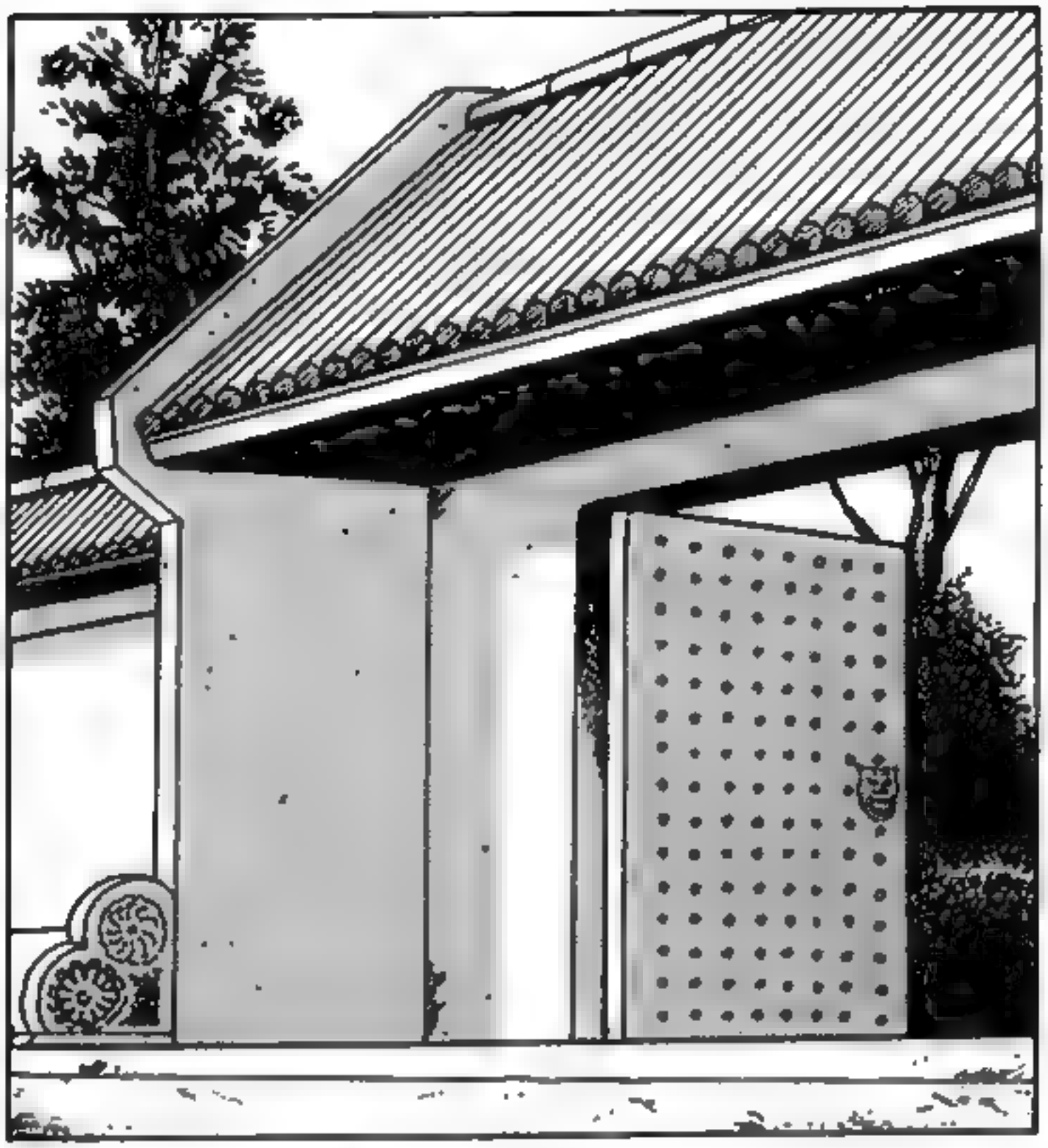
OF COURSE. THERE CAN BE NO HIGHER HONOUR FOR THIS HUMBLE SERVANT.

YES, I'M SURE YOU'RE VERY PLEASED.

YES, YOUR MAJESTY.

I HOPE YOU ACCEPT YOUR NEW POST AND CONTINUE SERVING ME WELL.

SOMEONE IN THE IMPERIAL COURT MOST DEFINITELY FEARS MY EXISTENCE AND PLOTTED TO TAKE MILITARY AUTHORITY AWAY FROM ME. I MUST BE ON GUARD AT ALL TIMES...
A PROMOTION TO A PRESTIGIOUS, BUT POWERLESS POSITION... THIS CANNOT BE THE IDEA OF A CHILD EMPEROR.



I WAS MADE HIS NEW GRAND TUTOR.
FATHER, FOR WHAT BUSINESS DID HIS MAJESTY SUDDENLY SUMMON YOU?

YES, A PRESTIGIOUS BUT POWERLESS POSITION.

GRAND TUTOR!?

RIGHT.

IN ANY CASE, YOU TWO SHOULD ALSO BE ON YOUR GUARDS.

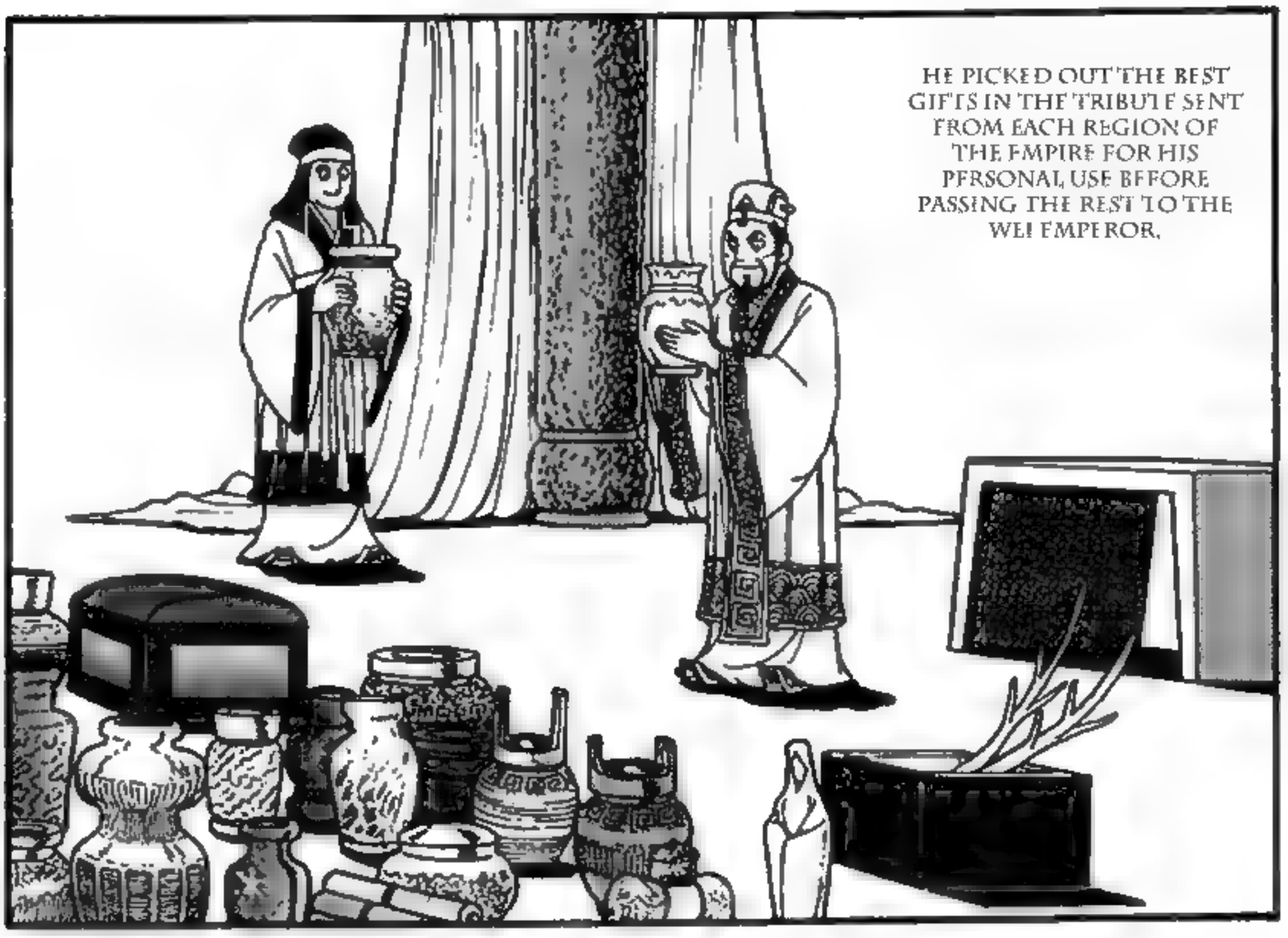
BUY WHY ALL OF A SUDDEN?

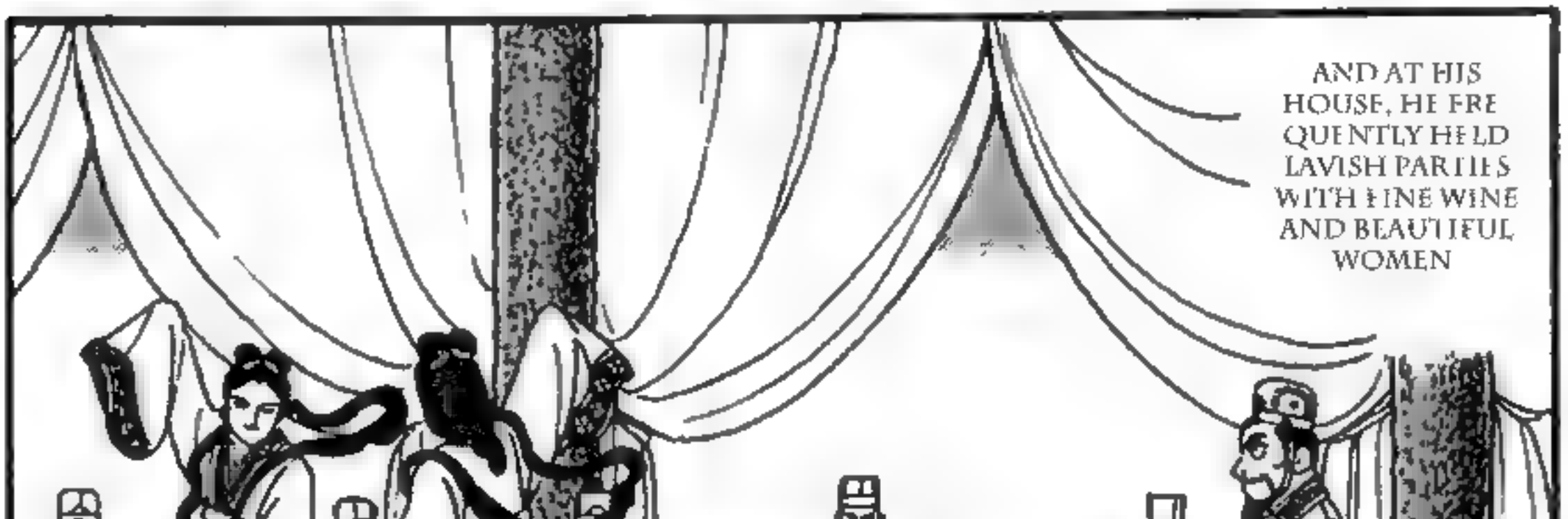
SOMEONE MUST FEAR MY INFLUENCE. I ALREADY HAVE A GOOD IDEA WHO THAT IS.

FROM TODAY, I WILL FEIGN SICKNESS AND REMAIN AT HOME. YOU TWO SHOULD DISTANCE YOURSELF FROM COURT FOR THE TIME BEING.

AFTER REMOVING SIMA YI FROM THE MILITARY, CAO SHUANG APPOINTED HIS YOUNGER BROTHERS TO POSITIONS OF POWER. CAO XI WAS COMMANDER OF THE CENTRAL ARMY, CAO XUN LEFT GENERAL OF MILITARY GUARDS AND CAO YAN THE ATTENDANT OF SCATTERED CAVALRY

THUS, HE NOW HELD UNQUESTIONED CONTROL OF WEI


HE PICKED OUT THE BEST GIFTS IN THE TRIBUTE SENT FROM EACH REGION OF THE EMPIRE FOR HIS PERSONAL USE BEFORE PASSING THE REST TO THE WEI EMPEROR.


AND AT HIS HOUSE, HE FRE QUENTLY HELD LAVISH PARTIES WITH FINE WINE AND BEAUTIFUL WOMEN

BY THE WAY, I'D HEARD THAT SIMA YI WAS ILL. IS THAT TRUE?

MN..

LI SHENG.

EVEN SICK, THAT WILY OLD MAN ISN'T TO BE UNDERESTI-MATED.

I HEARD THE SAME THING, SIR.

YES?

YES, SIR.

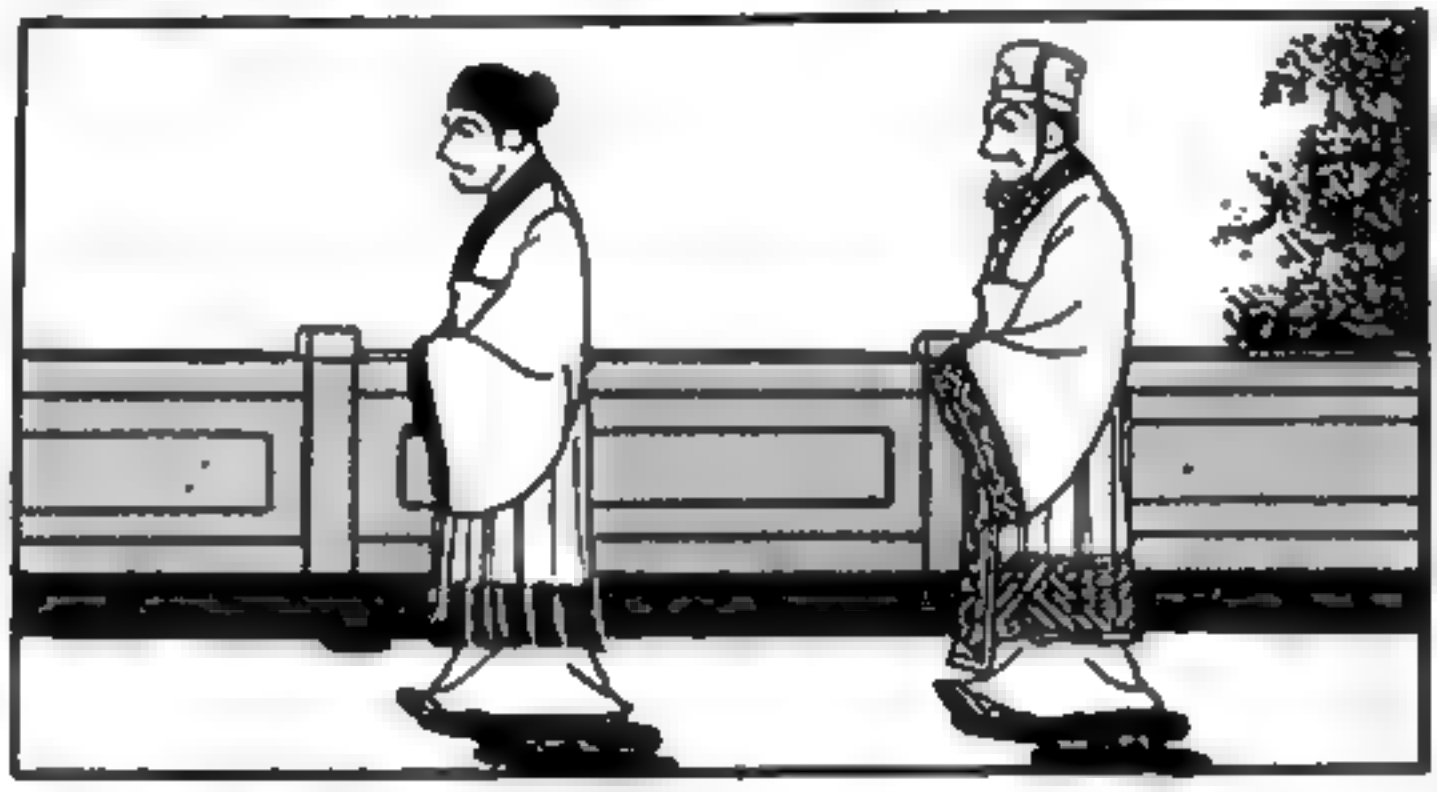
YOU'RE ON YOUR WAY TO QINGZHOU TOMORROW, ARE YOU NOT? CAN YOU PAY SIMA YI A VISIT TO SEE WHAT SHAPE HE IS IN?

MASTER, A MAN NAMED LI SHENG HAS COME TO SEE YOU.

SHI! ZHAO! THIS MAN IS MOST CERTAINLY SENT BY CAO SHUANG.

YES, FATHER.
EVERYONE HERE IS TO PLAY ALONG WITH MY ACTING.

LET HIM IN.



YES, YES...
IT HAS BEEN TOO LONG SINCE I LAST SAW YOU, SIR. FORGIVE ME, I NEVER REALIZED YOUR ILLNESS WAS SUCH A SERIOUS ONE.

BINGZHOU, EH? GOTTA BE CAREFUL WITH THE BARBARIANS UP IN THE NORTH.

I'VE RECENTLY BEEN APPOINTED IMPERIAL PROTECTOR OF QINGZHOU, SO I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BEST TO PAY YOU A VISIT WHILE ON MY WAY.

OH, SO YOU'RE COMING BACK FROM QINGZHOU?

NO, ***QINGZHOU***. IN THE EAST.

NO, I AM HEADED TO QINGZHOU, SIR. NOT BINGZHOU.

OH, YOU'RE HEADING BACK FROM BINGZHOU?

OF COURSE.

OH, I SEE. MAY I HAVE A BRUSH AND PAPER THEN?

FORGIVE MY FATHER. HIS HEARING IS NOT SO GOOD ANYMORE.

WELL TAKE CARE IN QINGZHOU THEN.

AH, I SEE! FORGIVE MY BAD EARS, LI SHENG.
AS I AM ON MY WAY TO BEGIN WORK AS QINGZHOU'S IMPERIAL PROTECTOR, I'VE COME TO PAY SIR A VISIT.

YES, SIR.

THANK YOU.
HERE IS YOUR MEDICINE, MASTER.

OH DEAR!

COUGH!
COUGH!

LI SHENG, IT SEEMS I CANNOT BEAT MY AGE FOR LONG. CAN YOU PLEASE ASK THE REGENT MARSHAL CAO SHUANG TO TAKE CARE OF MY BRIGHT SONS AFTER MY DEATH?

I NEED SOME REST NOW...

MNN...
YOU TOO...

PLEASE TAKE CARE, SIR.

ONCE LI SHENG REPORTS THIS TO CAO SHUANG, HE SHOULD TAKE HIS EYES OFF OF OUR FAMILY AND GO ON A GRAND HUNTING TRIP.

HAHA, LOOKS LIKE HE TOOK IT SERIOUSLY!

AND THAT IS EXACTLY WHEN WE WILL STRIKE AND RECLAIM OUR RIGHTFUL POSITION.

I DOUBT THAT DECREPIT OLD MAN WILL EVEN LIVE TO SEE TOMORROW.

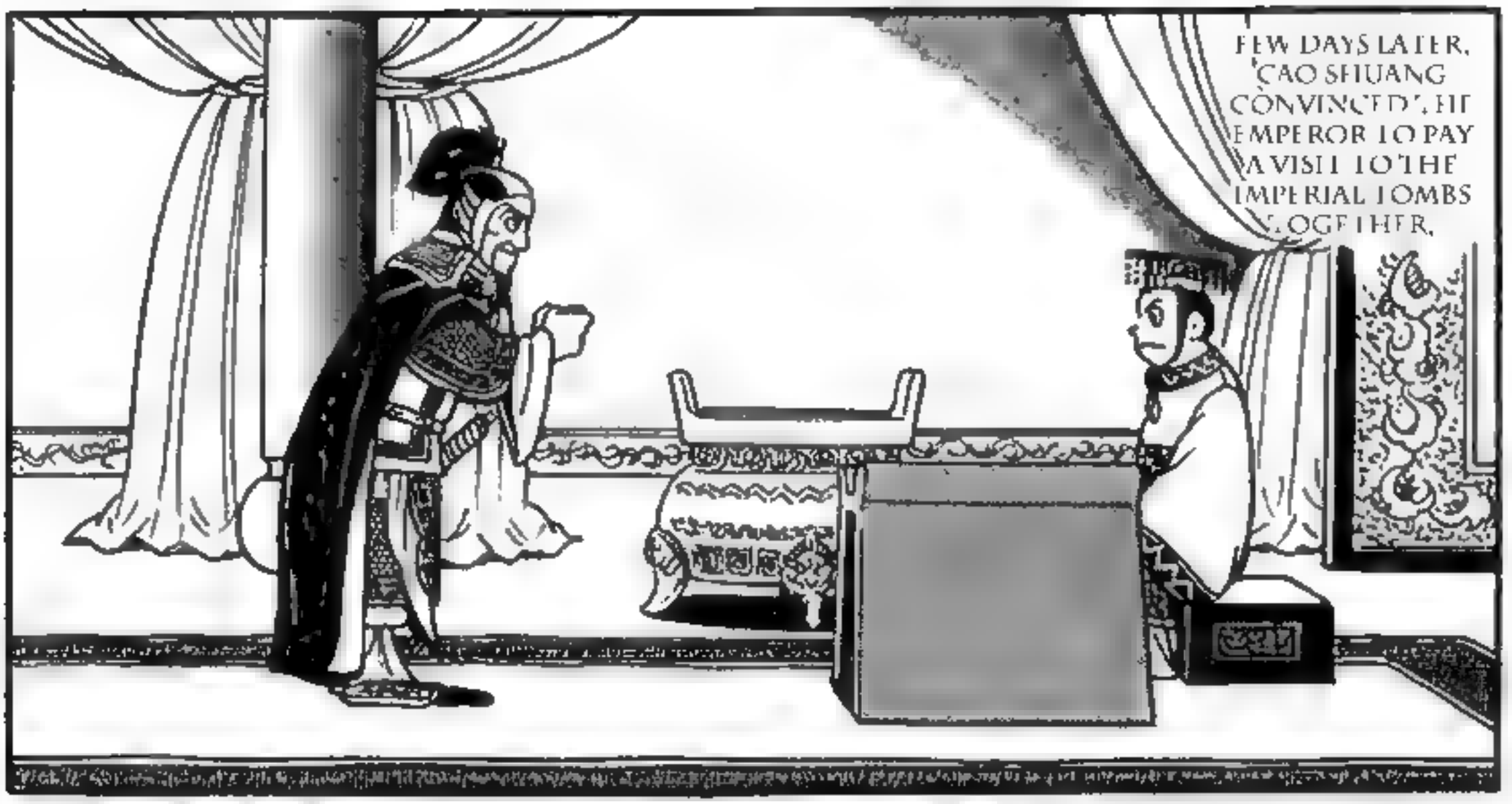
HE SPILLED MEDICINE ALL OVER HIS ROBES AND COULD HARDLY HEAR.

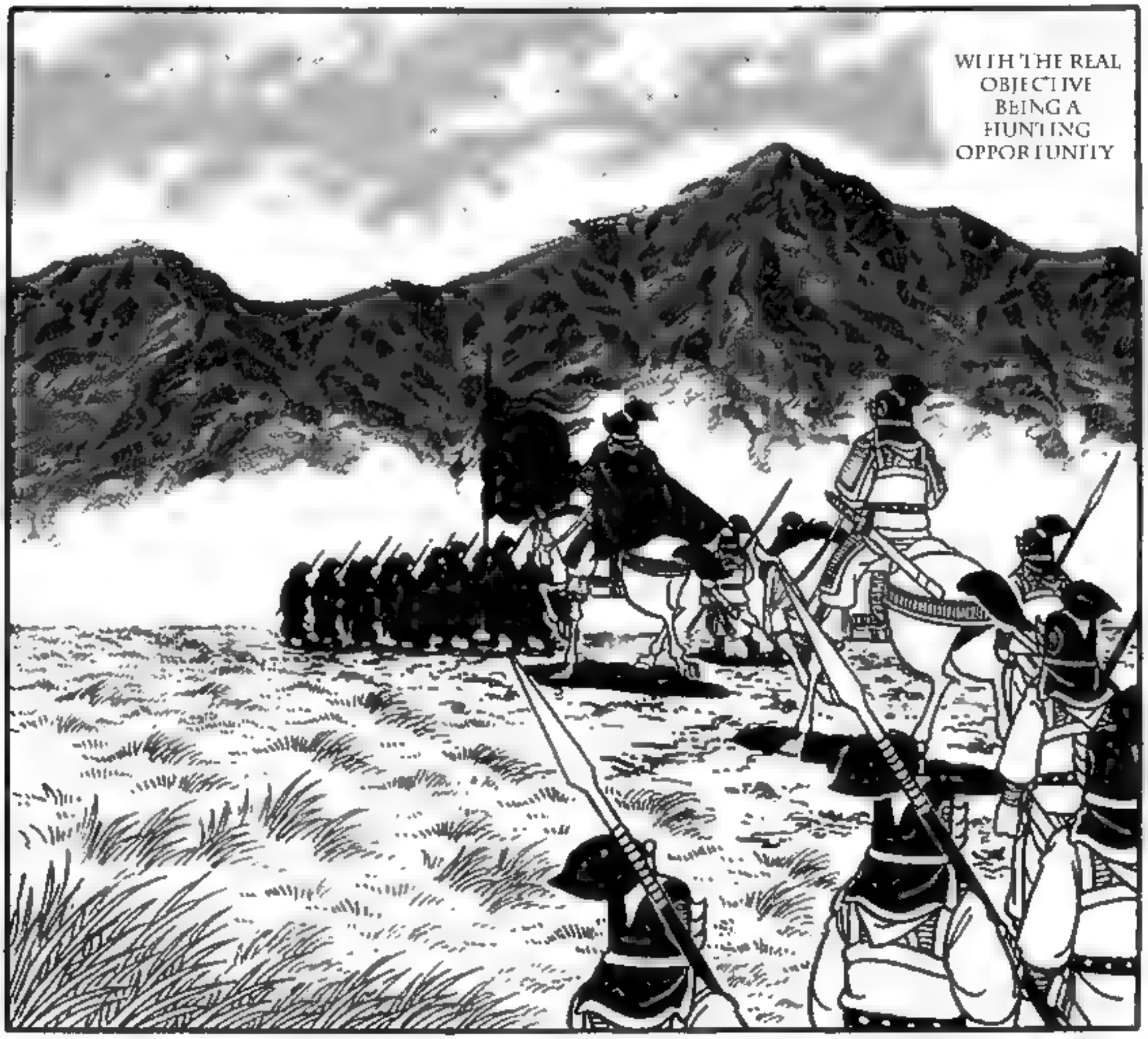
HE WAS REALLY THAT ILL!?

HAHAHA!

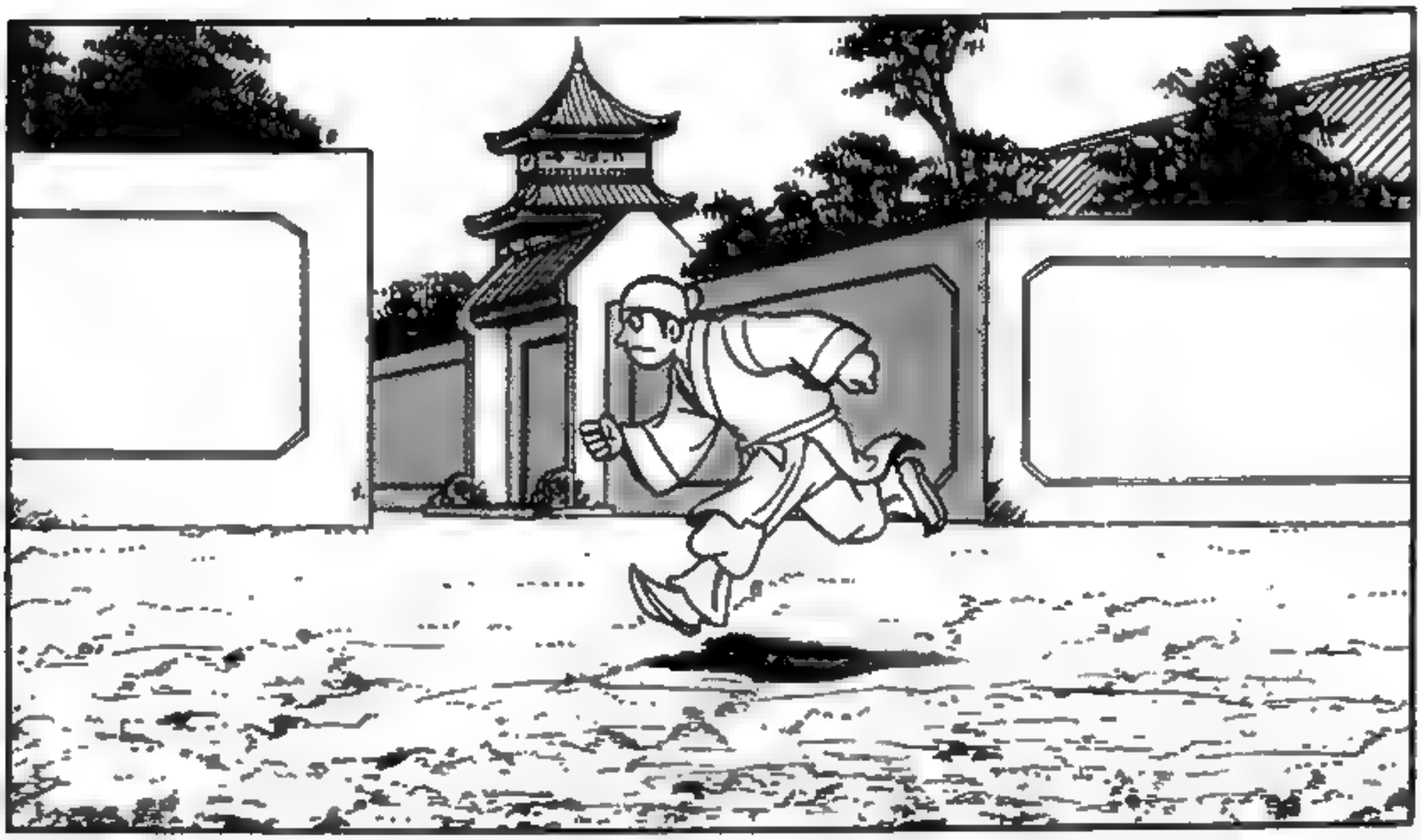
YES, NO ONE IN WEI CAN STAND UP TO YOU NOW, SIR.

I CAN FINALLY REST AT EASE ONCE THAT OLD MAN CROAKS!


FEW DAYS LATER, CAO SHUANG CONVINCED THE EMPEROR TO PAY A VISIT TO THE IMPERIAL TOMBS TOGETHER,


WITH THE REAL OBJECTIVE BEING A HUNTING OPPORTUNITY

COUP D'ETAT



CAO SHUANG HAS GONE HUNTING WITH THE EMPEROR!

HE'S LEFT THE CAPITAL!?

YES?
SIR!

THEY TOO ARE ACCOM-PANYING THE HUNT.

WHAT ABOUT HIS BROTHERS, CAO XI, CAO XUN, AND CAO YAN?

HAHA.

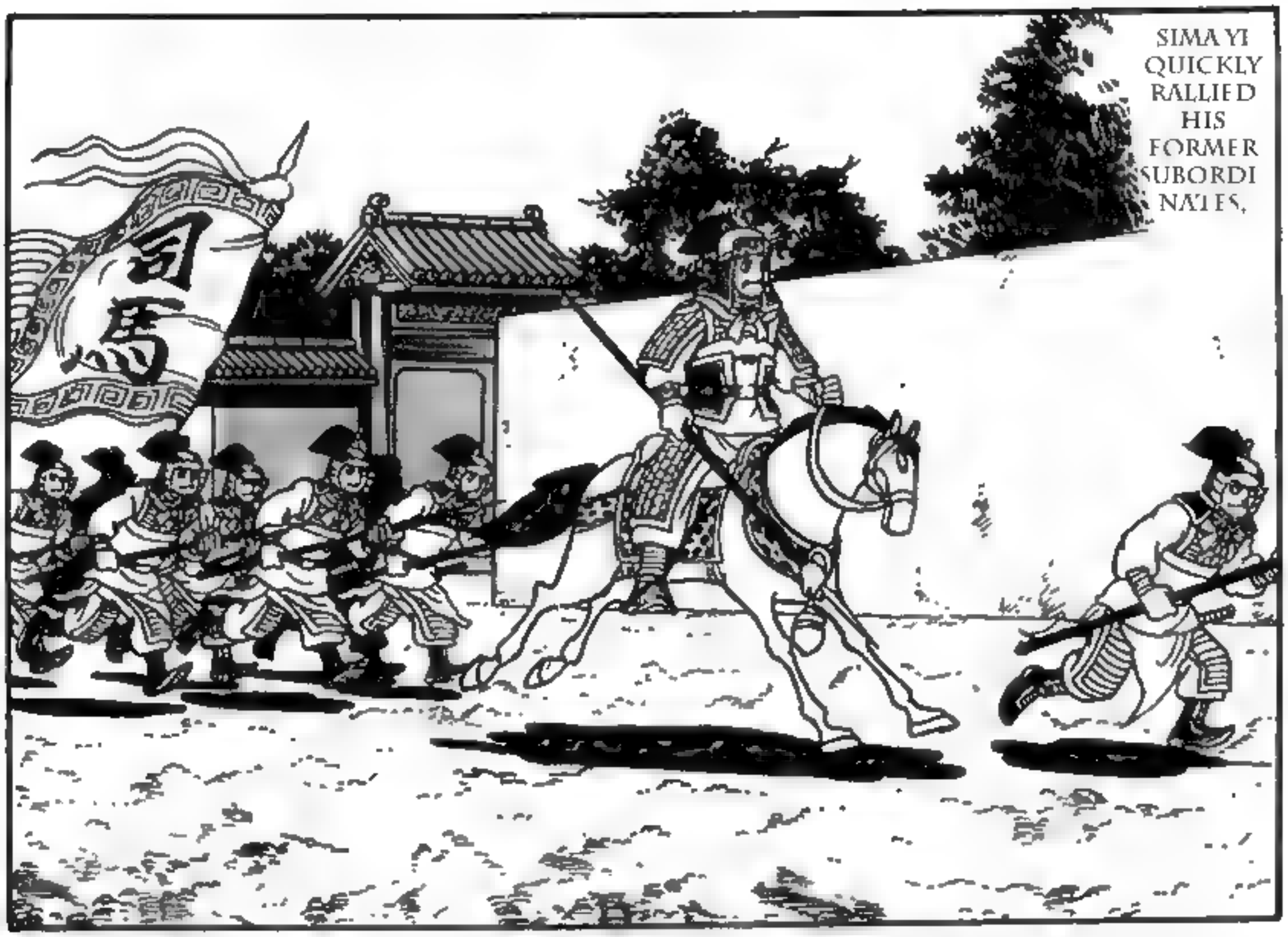
YES, SIR.

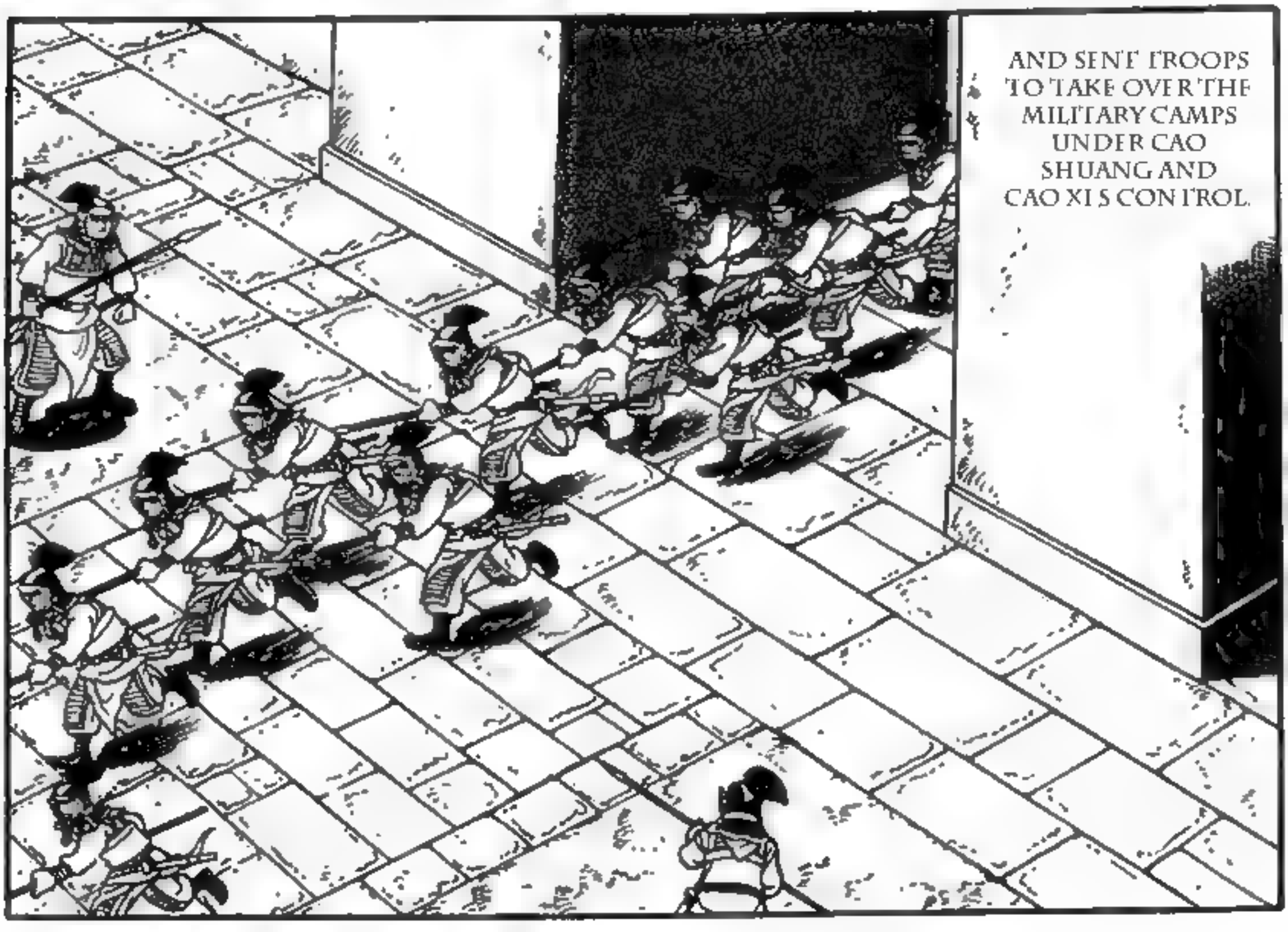
SO HE AND HIS BROTHERS ARE ALL AWAY CURRRENTLY?

YES, FATHER!

LET US CARRY OUT OUR PLAN AT ONCE!

SEEMS MY ACTING YIELDED GREAT RESULTS, MY SONS! I SUPPOSE I COULD EVEN BECOME AN ACTOR WITH MY SKILLS, HAHA!


SIMA YI QUICKLY RALLIED HIS FORMER SUBORDI NATES,
司馬


AND SENT TROOPS TO TAKE OVER THE MILITARY CAMPS UNDER CAO SHUANG AND CAO XI S CONTROL.

TO UPHOLD WEI, EMPRESS DOWAGER GUO.

GRAND TUTOR!? WHAT IS THE MEANING BEHIND THE STORMING OF THE PALACE WITH ARMED TROOPS?

CAO SHUANG HAS EXPLOITED HIS MAJESTY'S YOUNG AGE TO PLACE HIMSELF IN SOLE CONTROL OF THE EMPIRE AND NOW ONLY ACTS TO FILL HIS BELLY.

UPHOLD WEI?

HOWEVER, WU AND SHU'S EXISTENCE PROVES THAT THE REALM IS STILL FAR FROM UNITED. ALTHOUGH SHU HAS NOT ATTACKED US FOR THE PAST DECADE, THAT IS ONLY DUE TO RECENT DEATHS OF IMPORTANT MINISTERS SUCH AS JIANG WAN AND DONG YUN. IT MOST CERTAINLY HAS NOT ABANDONED ITS AMBITION TO RESTORE THE HAN.

IF CAO SHUANG CONTINUES TO ONLY ENRICH HIMSELF AND IGNORES THE IMPORTANT AFFAIRS OF THE EMPIRE, WEI WILL FIND ITSELF EASY PREY TO SHU AND WU IN DUE TIME. THAT IS WHY I HAVE DECIDED TO MAKE A STAND AND UPHOLD OUR EMPIRE.

AS LONG AS YOU GIVE CONSENT, I CAN MOBILIZE OUR ARMY.

BUT HIS MAJESTY IS OUT WITH CAO SHUANG! WHAT WILL YOU DO!?

WORRY NOT, HIS MAJESTY WILL NOT BE CAUGHT IN A BATTLE IF THAT IS WHAT YOU FEAR. CAO SHUANG WILL KNOW BETTER THAN TO RISK ANY ACTION THAT MAY BRING HARM TO HIS MAJESTY.

I CANNOT CONSENT TO ANY ACTION THAT MAY BRING HARM TO HIS MAJESTY.

VERY WELL. AS EMPEROR MING TRUSTED YOU ENOUGH TO TAKE CARE OF HIS SON, I TOO WILL TRUST YOUR JUDGMENT.

WITH YOUR CONSENT, I WILL HAVE ENOUGH BARGAINING CHIPS TO THREATEN HIM TO RETURN HIS POWER BACK TO HIS MAJESTY'S RIGHTFUL AUTHORITY.

MOREOVER, WE HAVE HIS FAMILY MEMBERS AS HOSTAGES HERE IN THE CAPITAL. HE WILL NOT RISK BATTLE AT THE COST OF ALL THEIR LIVES.

WITH THAT, SIMA YI CAMPED JUST OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL WITH AN ARMY

ヒュン

HA! BULL'S-EYE!

YELP!

WHAT IS IT?

?
IT'S AN EMERGENCY!

SIMA YI HAS RAISED AN ARMY!

WHA!

WHAT!?

I THOUGHT HE WAS ILL!

THE EMPRESS DOWAGER HAS GRANTED SIMA YI THE AUTHORITY TO COMMAND AN ARMY! LUOYANG IS NOW IN HIS HANDS AND HE IS CAMPED JUST OUTSIDE WITH HIS ARMY!

DAMN THAT FOX!

SEEMS LIKE HE PULLED THE WOOL OVER OUT EYES, BROTHER.

FIGHT SIMA YI!? THE MAN THAT EVEN KONGMING COULDN'T BEAT!?

NOW THAT IT'S COME TO THIS, WE SHOULD MOVE HIS MAJESTY TO XUCHANG AND PREPARE TO FIGHT SIMA YI.

AND WHAT OF OUR WIVES AND CHILDREN IN THE CAPITAL? WOULD YOU LET THEM ALL BE EXECUTED!?

THERE'S NOT A CHANCE WE CAN BEAT SIMA YI...

SIMA YI WILL SURELY HUNT ALL OF CAO SHUANG'S SUPPORTERS DOWN...

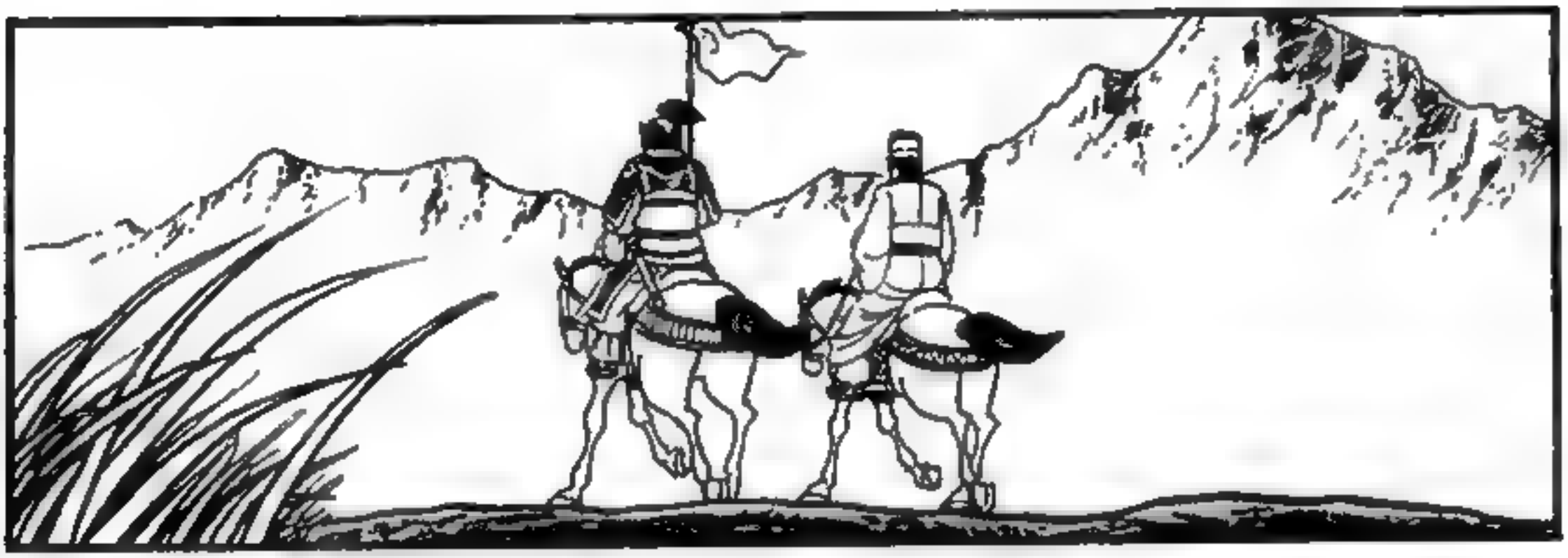
AHH! MY FAMILY TOO!

HM?

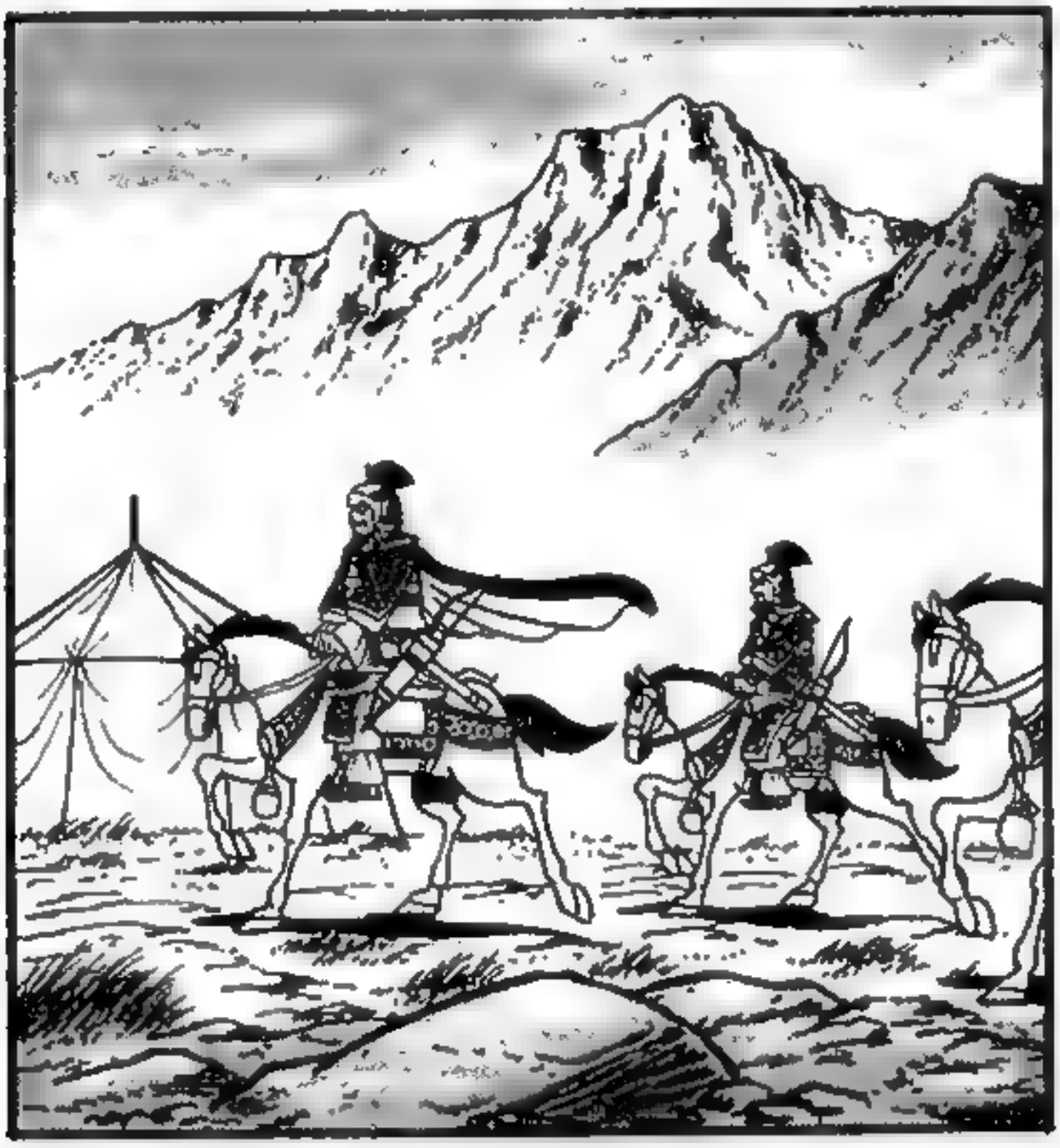
HM?

I HAVE BEEN SENT HERE ON BEHALF OF THE GRAND TUTOR. I WISH TO SPEAK WITH CAO SHUANG.

I AM HERE!
HM...
...
THE GRAND TUTOR SENDS YOU THIS LETTER.
I WILL REPORT THUSLY BACK TO THE GRAND TUTOR.
I WILL SEND MY REPLY SHORTLY.



CALL OFF THE HUNT.



WHAT DID HE WRITE, BROTHER?

I WILL TELL YOU IN PRIVATE.

OUR CRIMES WILL BE PARDONED IF WE RETURN ALL POWER BACK TO HIS MAJESTY'S RIGHTFUL AUTHORITY!?

I SUPPOSE SO.

SO ALL OUR RANK AND TITLES WILL BE TAKEN FROM US?

ARE YOU SERIOUS!?

NO, I CANNOT AGREE TO THIS. WE MUST TAKE HIS MAJESTY TO XUCHANG AND THEN RAISE TROOPS TO FIGHT SIMA YI!

SIMA YI IS A PEERLESS COMMANDER AND HIS TWO SONS ARE JUST AS SHARP-WITTED. MANY OFFICERS AND TROOPS ARE STILL LOYAL TO SIMA YI DUE TO ALL THEIR YEARS TOGETHER ALONG THE WEI RIVER FIGHTING SHU. SOONER OR LATER, WE WILL ONLY FIND OUR SUPPORT CRUMBLING AND DEFECTING TO SIMA YI.

.....

WHO KNOWS JUST WHEN OUR NEXT MEAL MAY BE POISONED?

MANY OFFICERS AND TROOPS ARE MISSING.

WHAT!?

WHAT IS IT?

FORGIVE ME FOR INTRUDING, SIR, BUT...

AHH!

A FEW TROOPS, SERVANTS, AND NOBLES PROTECTING HIS MAJESTY.
HOW MANY ARE STILL HERE?

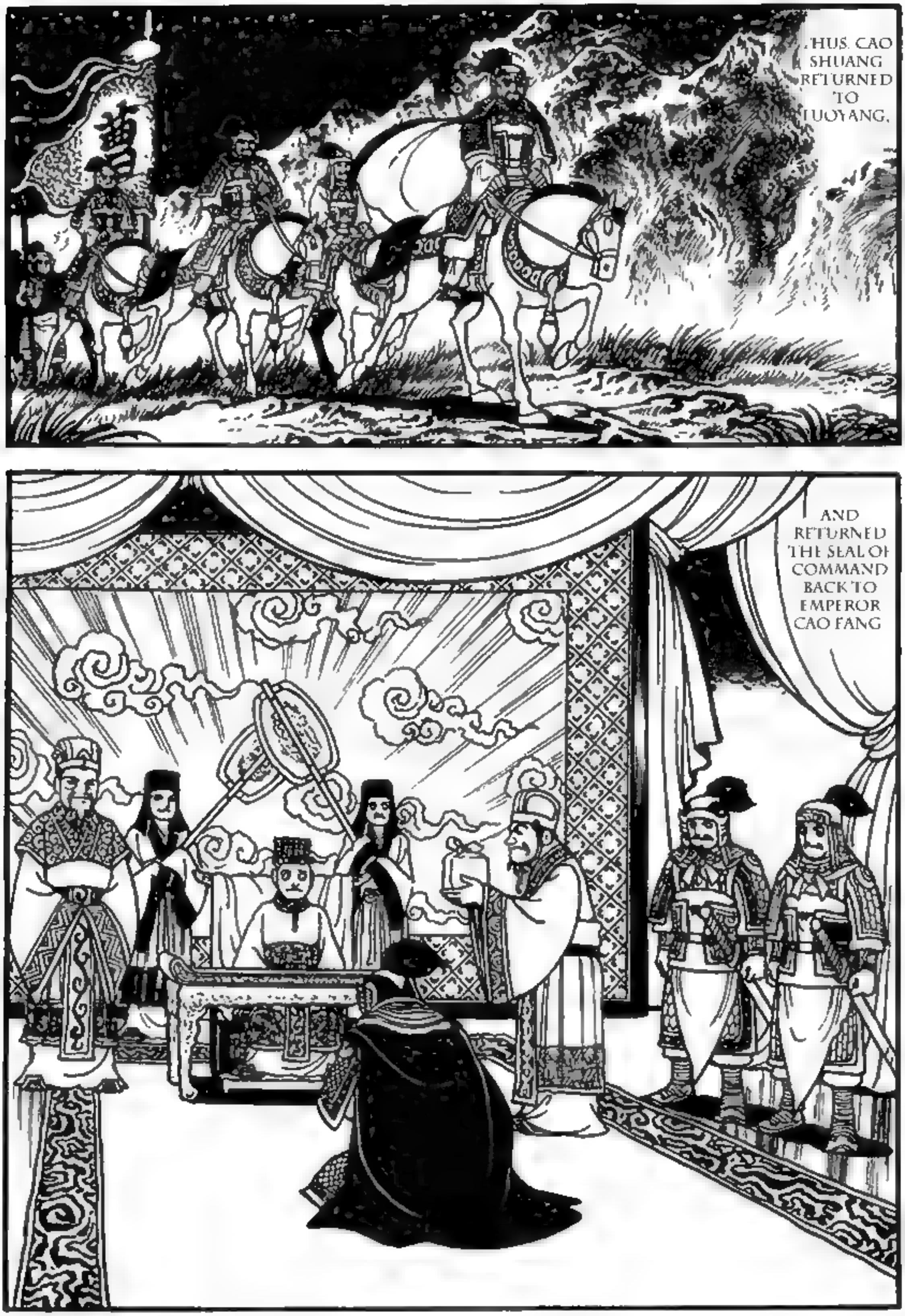
SEE! DO YOU STILL THINK WE CAN FIGHT? WE MAY EVEN FIND OURSELVES MURDERED BEFORE WE REACH XUCHANG.

SIMA YI IS ONLY ASKING THAT WE RETURN OUR COMMAND OF THE ARMED FORCES BACK TO THE EMPEROR. SINCE WE ARE STILL MEMBERS OF THE IMPERIAL FAMILY, HE WILL NOT DARE TO DO MORE.

WE'LL STILL HAVE OUR RICHES TO BE CONTENT WITH AND WE CAN BIDE OUR TIME SINCE SIMA YI IS STILL AN OLD MAN, EVEN IF HE IS HEALTHY FOR NOW...

THEN IT'S DECIDED.

HMM, YES, YOU DO HAVE A POINT, BROTHER.


THUS, CAO SHUANG RETURNED TO LUOYANG,
AND RETURNED THE SEAL OF COMMAND BACK TO EMPEROR CAO FANG

YES, SIR.

YOU ARE TO CONFINE YOURSELF IN YOUR HOUSE FOR THE TIME BEING!

WITH THE TREASURES THEY AMASSED DURING THEIR TIME IN POWER AND THEIR STATUS AS MEMBERS OF THE IMPERIAL FAMILY, IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL THEY REBEL AGAIN IF LEFT ALONE.

OF COURSE NOT.

ARE YOU REALLY PLANNING TO LET CAO SHUANG AND HIS BROTHERS GO FREE LIKE THIS?

THEN...

I DO NOT HAVE LONG TO LIVE. I MUST UPROOT THESE SEEDS OF REBELLION NOW WHILE I CAN.

EXCELLENT.

YES, I WILL ORDER CONFISCATION OF THEIR PROPERTY AND HAVE THEM TRIED FOR TREASON.

THUS, CAO SHUANG, HIS THREE BROTHERS AND THEIR IMMEDIATE FAMILY WERE ALL PROMPTLY EXECUTED FOR TREASON

FOR REMOVING CAO SHUANG S CORRUPT INFLU ENCE, SIMA YI WAS REWARDED WITH THE POST OF CHANCELLOR

THE AGE OF THE SIMA CLAN NOW DAWNED

CHANCEL-
LOR!

UPON HEARING CAO SHUANG'S EXECUTION, XIAHOU BA IN YONGZHOU HAS REBELLED!

WHAT IS IT?

YES, BUT WITH ONLY A FORCE OF 3000 SOLDIERS.

XIAHOU BA!?

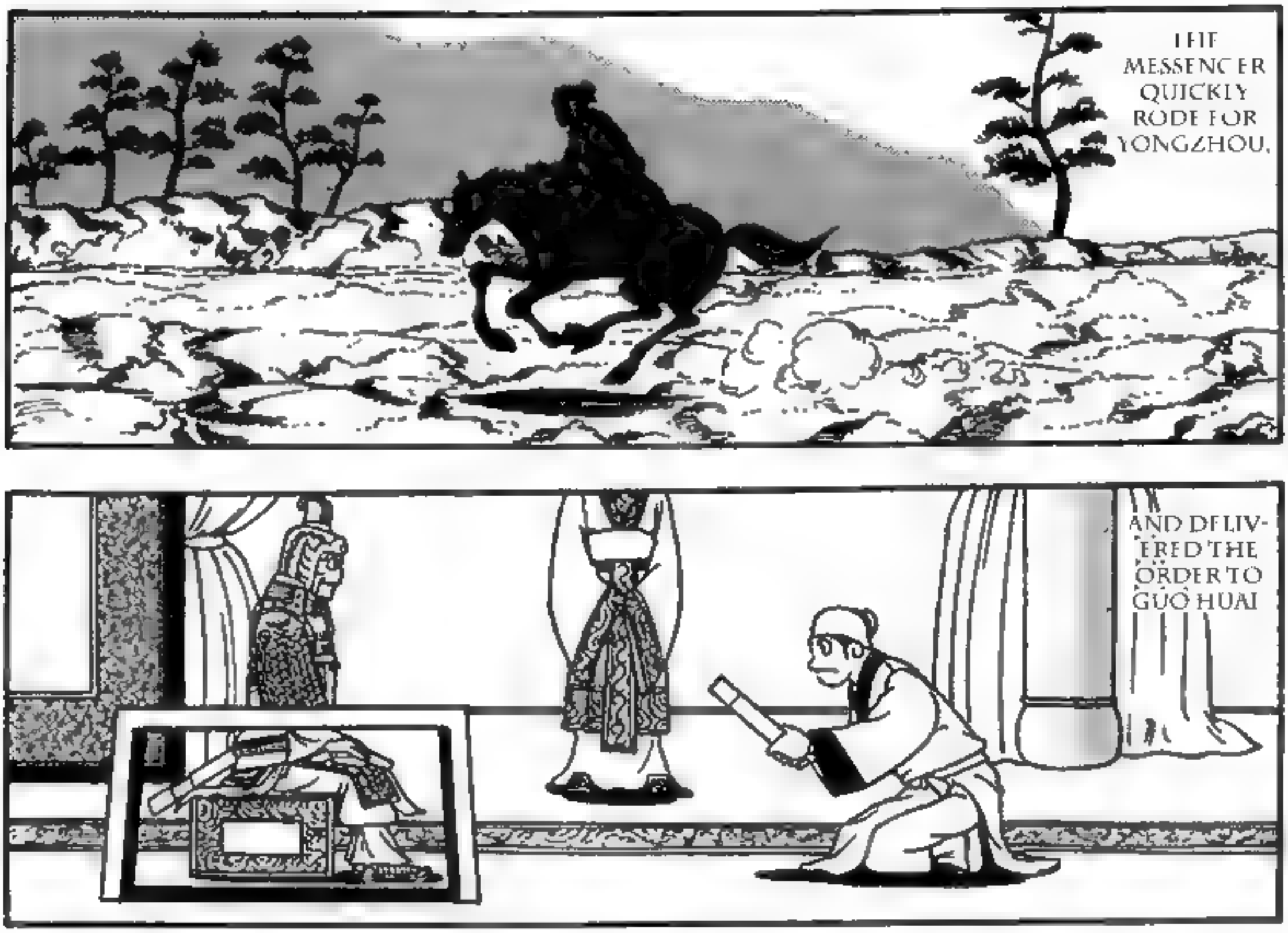
YES, I ASSUME HE FEELS THREATENED ABOUT HIS POSITION AS WELL.

AS A DISTANT MEMBER OF THE CAO CLAN, HE MUST HAVE BEEN ANGERED WITH HOW YOU TREATED CAO SHUANG AND HIS FAMILY.

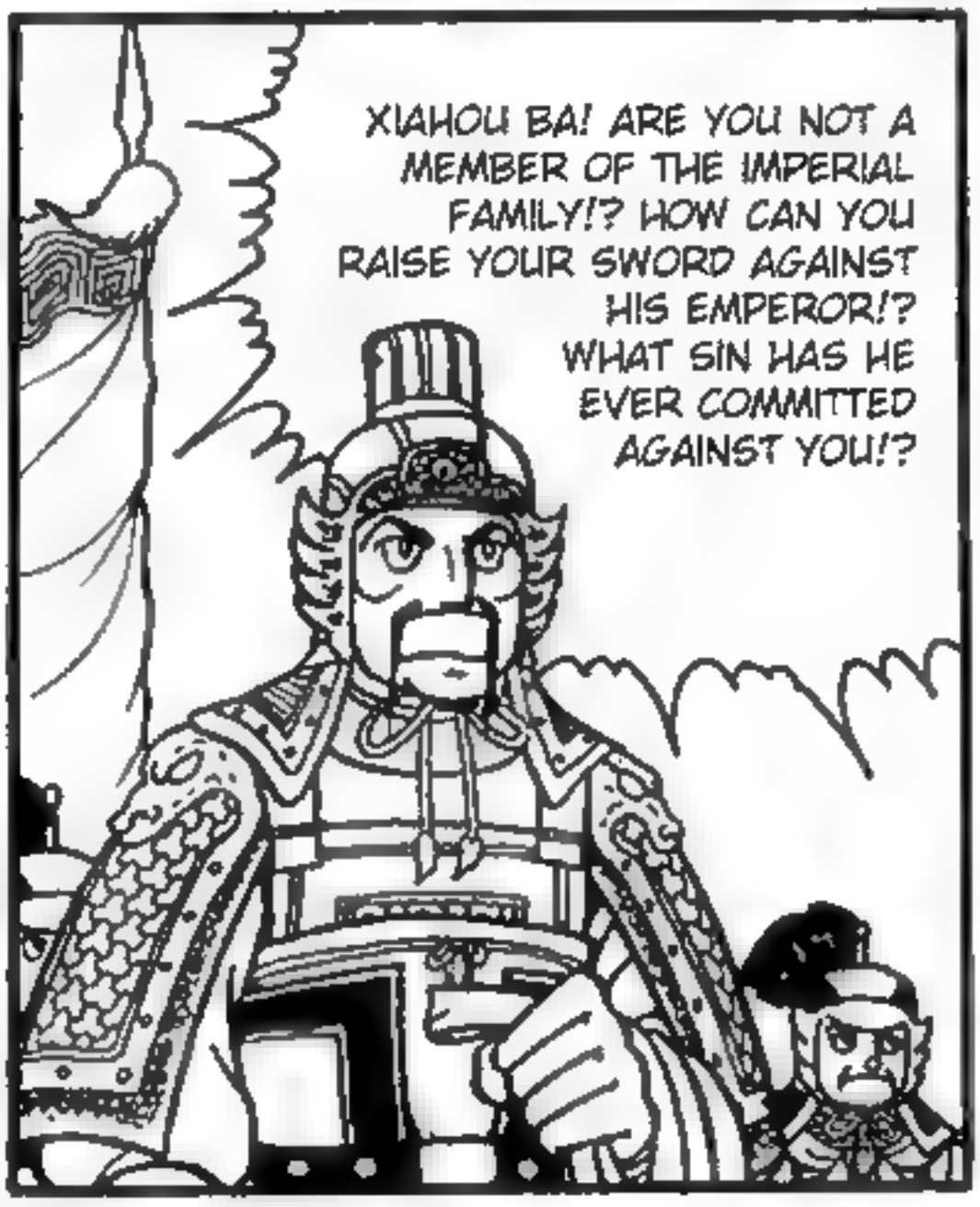
YES, SIR.

TELL GUO HUAI, AS THE IMPERIAL PROTECTOR OF YONGZHOU, SHOULD PUT DOWN THE REBELS AT ONCE!

BUT WHAT CAN HE DO WITH JUST 3000?


THE MESSENGER QUICKLY RODE FOR YONGZHOU.
AND DELIVERED THE ORDER TO GUO HUAI
HE PROMPTLY OBEYED THE ORDER
郭淮

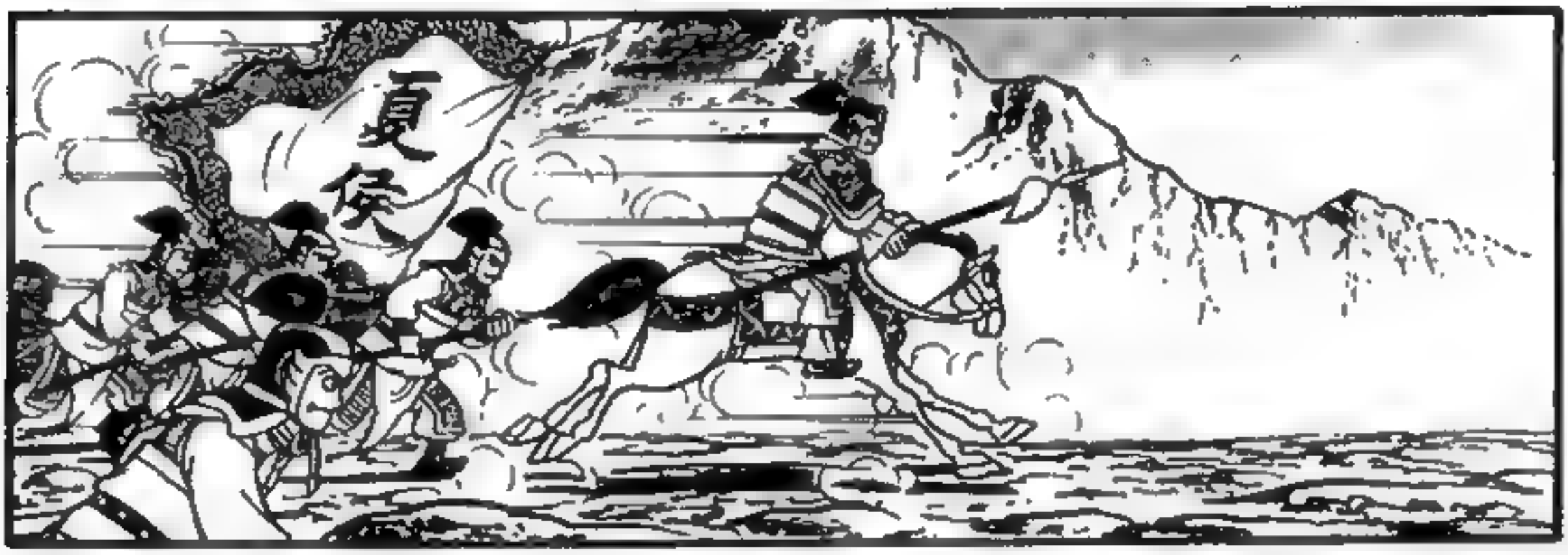
IT IS NOT THE EMPEROR, BUT SIMA YI WHO HAS SINNED! HE BROKE HIS PROMISE TO SPARE CAO SHUANG AND NOW SEEKS TO MAKE WEI THE PLAYTHING OF THE SIMA CLAN!

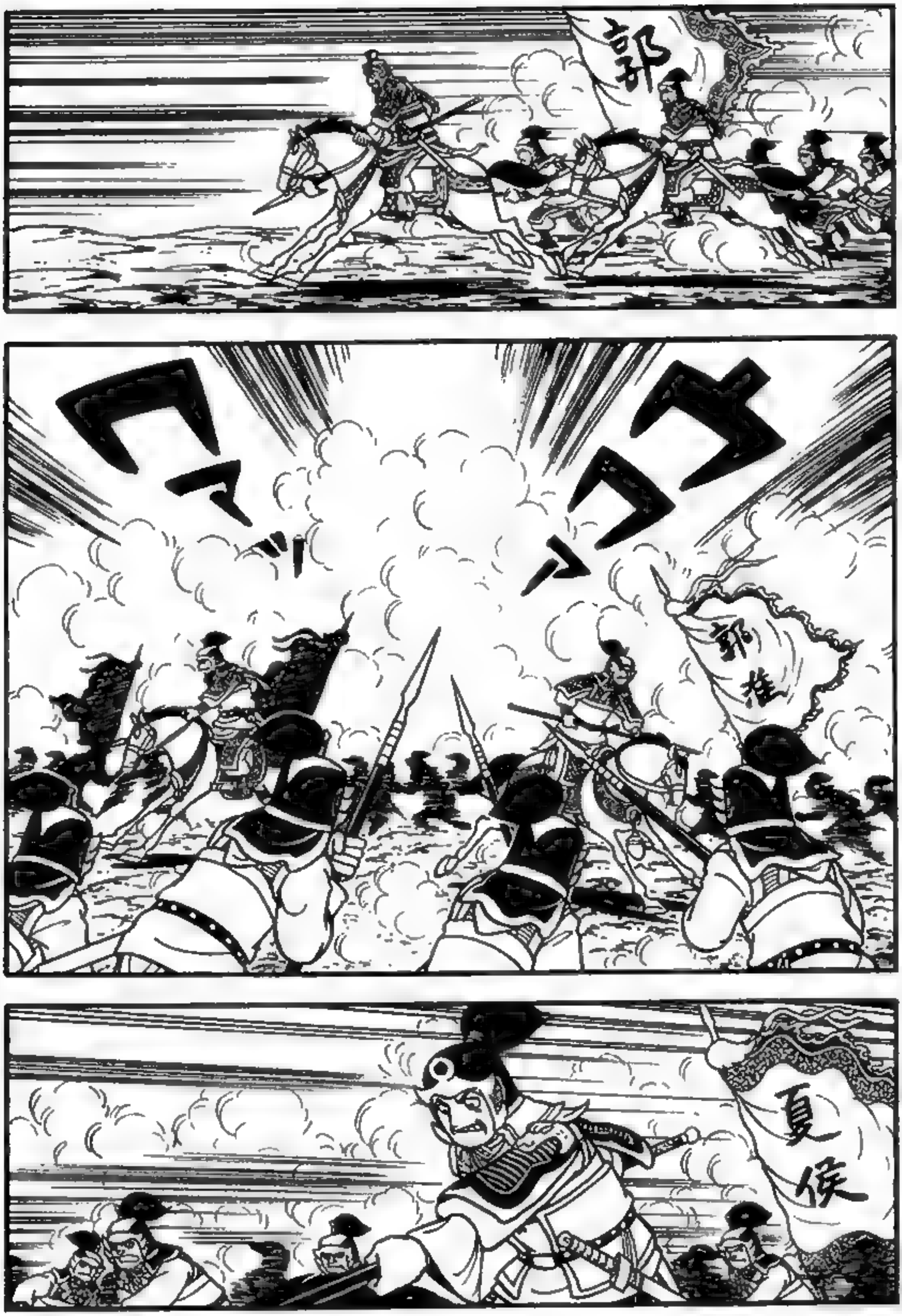

XIAHOU BA! ARE YOU NOT A MEMBER OF THE IMPERIAL FAMILY!? HOW CAN YOU RAISE YOUR SWORD AGAINST HIS EMPEROR!? WHAT SIN HAS HE EVER COMMITTED AGAINST YOU!?

WHAT DELUSION IS THIS!? THE ENTIRE EMPIRE KNOWS THAT CAO SHUANG WAS A CORRUPT REGENT WHO OVERSTEPPED HIS BOUNDS BY APPROPRIATING THE EMPEROR'S AUTHORITY FOR HIS PERSONAL GAINS! SIMA YI IS A RIGHTEOUS HERO!

ATTACK!

HERO!? I WILL NO LONGER EXCHANGE WORDS WITH A FOOL LIKE YOU! I WILL TAKE MATTERS INTO MY OWN HANDS AND SLAY THAT REBEL!


夏侯
NO NEED TO HOLD BACK! ATTACK!
郭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HM!?

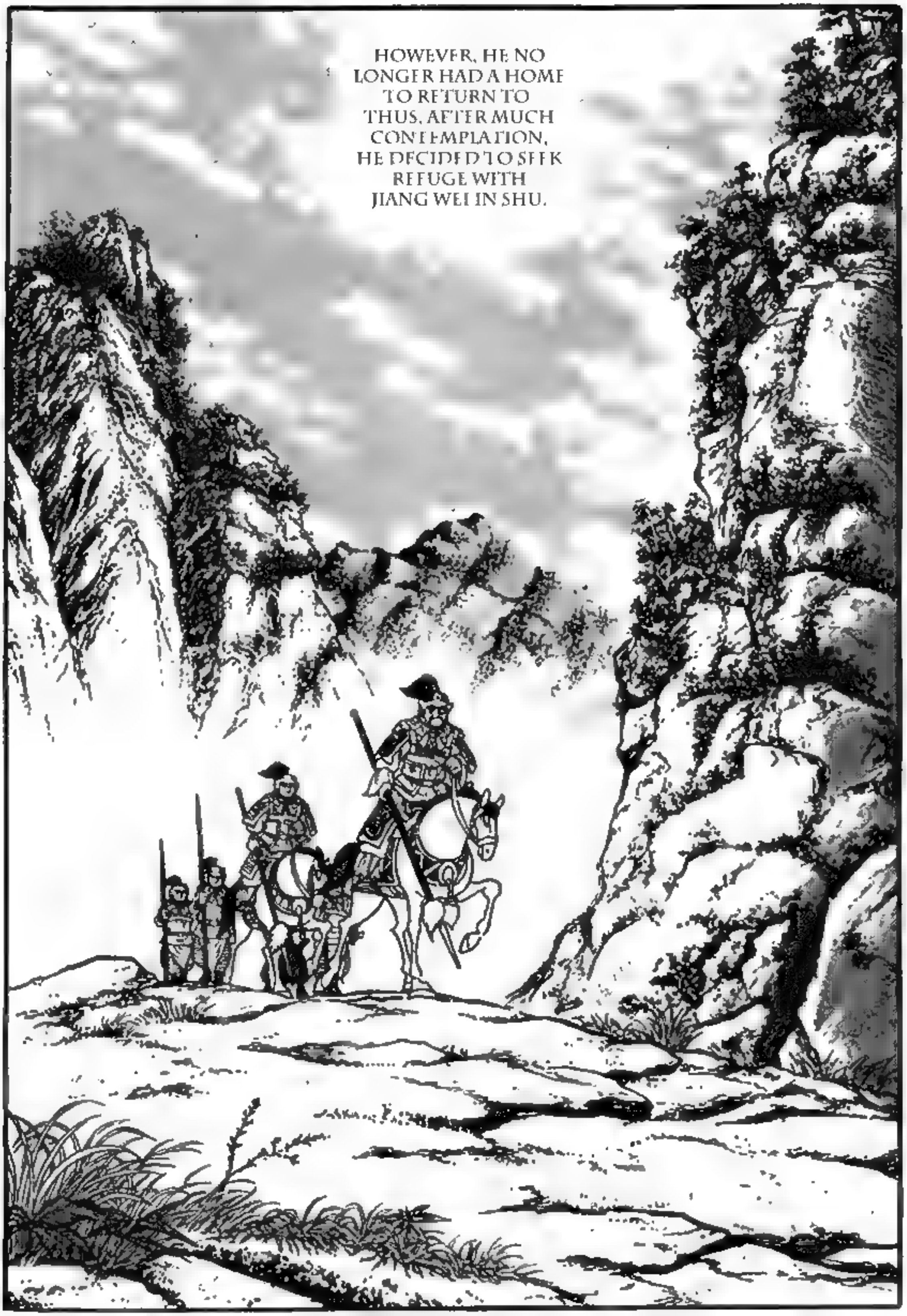
AH!

MORE ENEMIES!

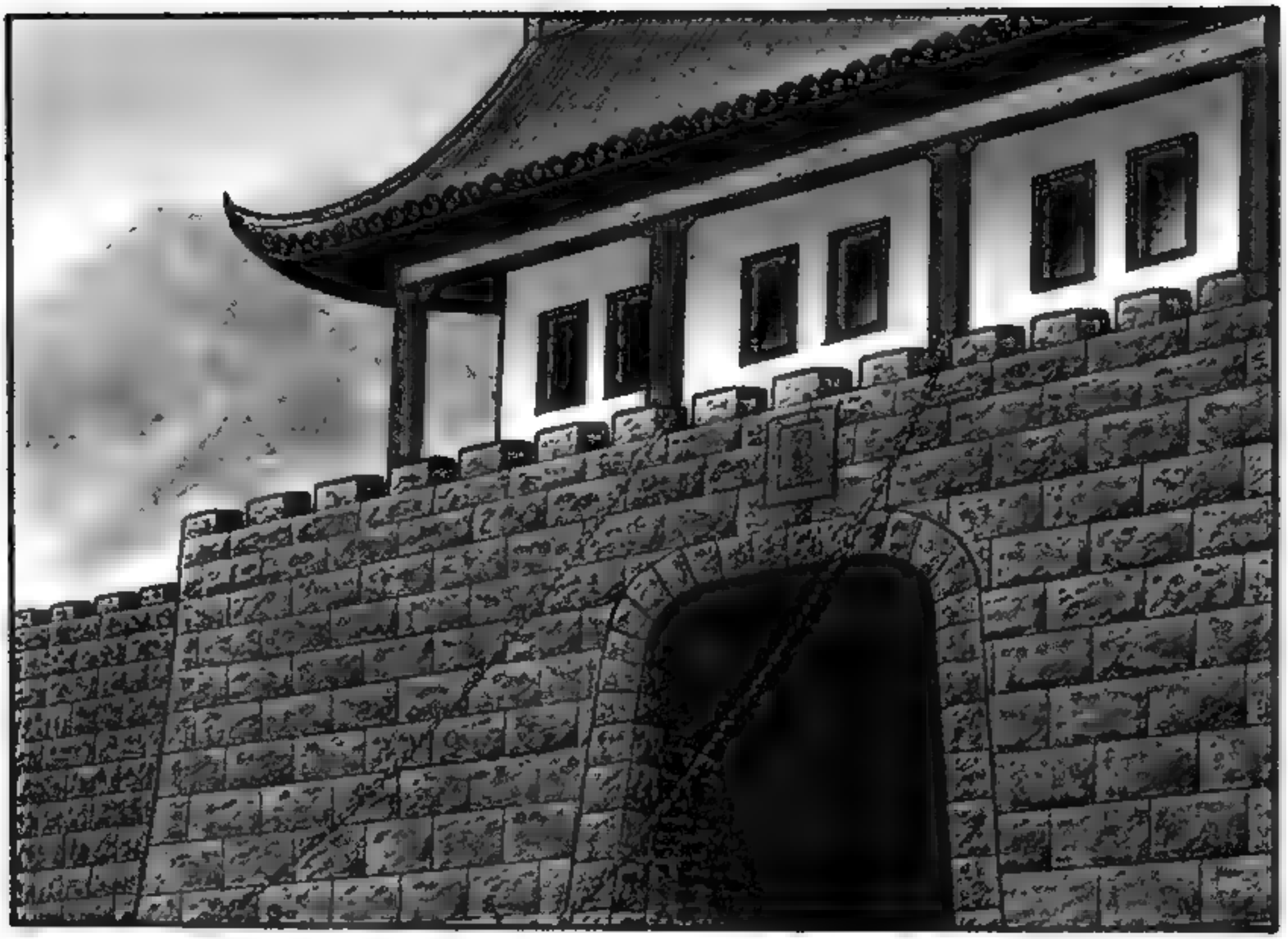
GUO HUAI HAD PLACED HIDDEN TROOPS BEHIND XIAHOU BA'S FORCES BEFORE THE BATTLE

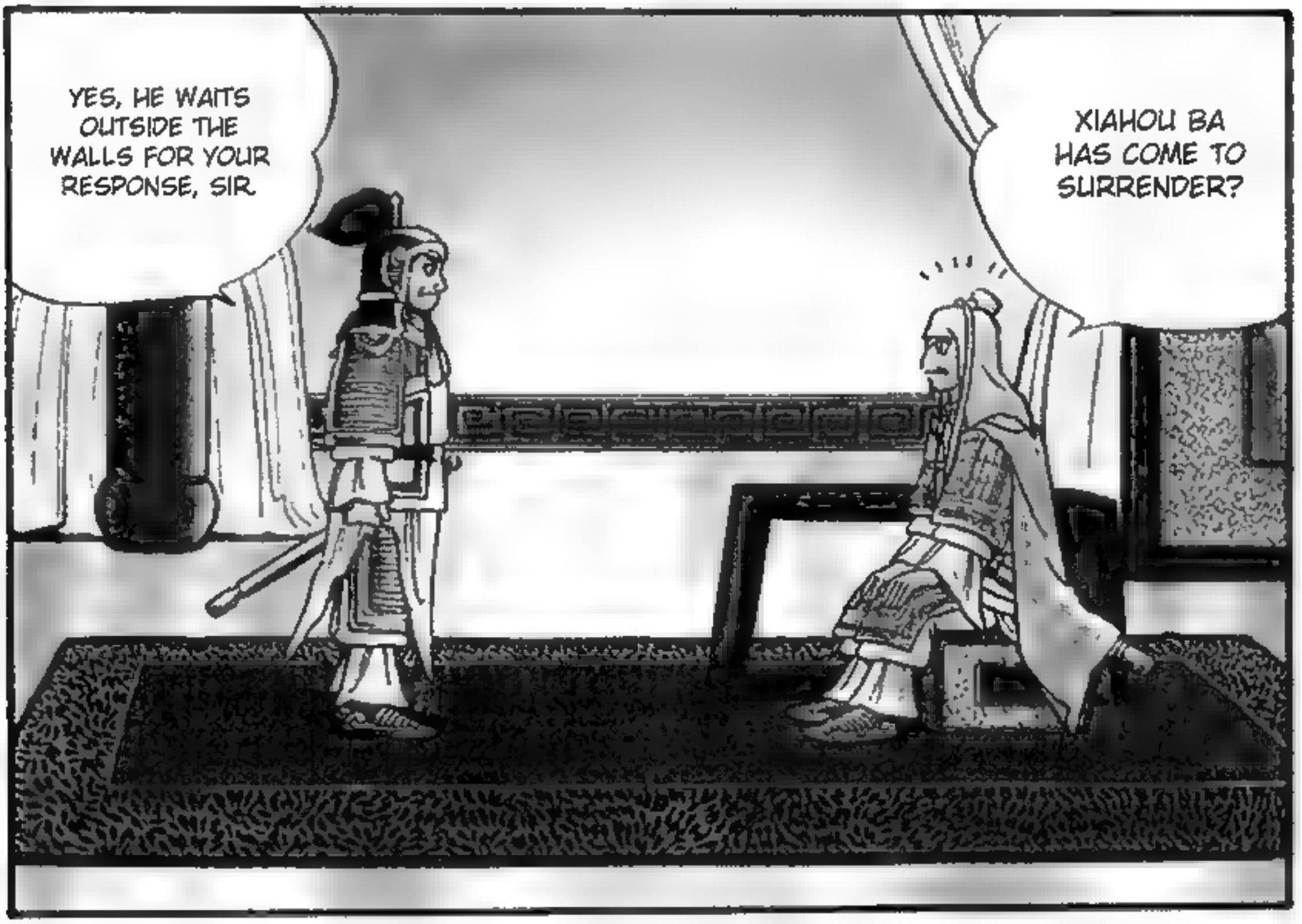
郭淮
HAHAHA! LET THIS VETERAN WHO BRAVED KONGMING'S CAMPAIGNS TEACH YOU HOW A BATTLE SHOULD BE FOUGHT, XIAHOU BA!
XIAHOU BA'S TROOPS WERE QUICKLY ROUTED UPON BEING SURPRISED FROM THE REAR
STILL, XIAHOU BAO MANAGED TO ESCAPE THE ENVELOPMENT

HOWEVER, HE NO LONGER HAD A HOME TO RETURN TO THUS, AFTER MUCH CONTEMPLATION, HE DECIDED TO SEEK REFUGE WITH JIANG WEI IN SHU.



MOBILIZATION




YES, HE WAITS OUTSIDE THE WALLS FOR YOUR RESPONSE, SIR
XIAHOU BA HAS COME TO SURRENDER?

HE CLAIMS THAT SIMA YI IS TRYING TO SEIZE WEI FOR HIMSELF.

ISN'T XIAHOU BA A MEMBER OF THE WEI IMPERIAL FAMILY? HOW CAN A MAN LIKE HIM BETRAY NOT ONLY HIS EMPIRE BUT HIS FAMILY AS WELL?

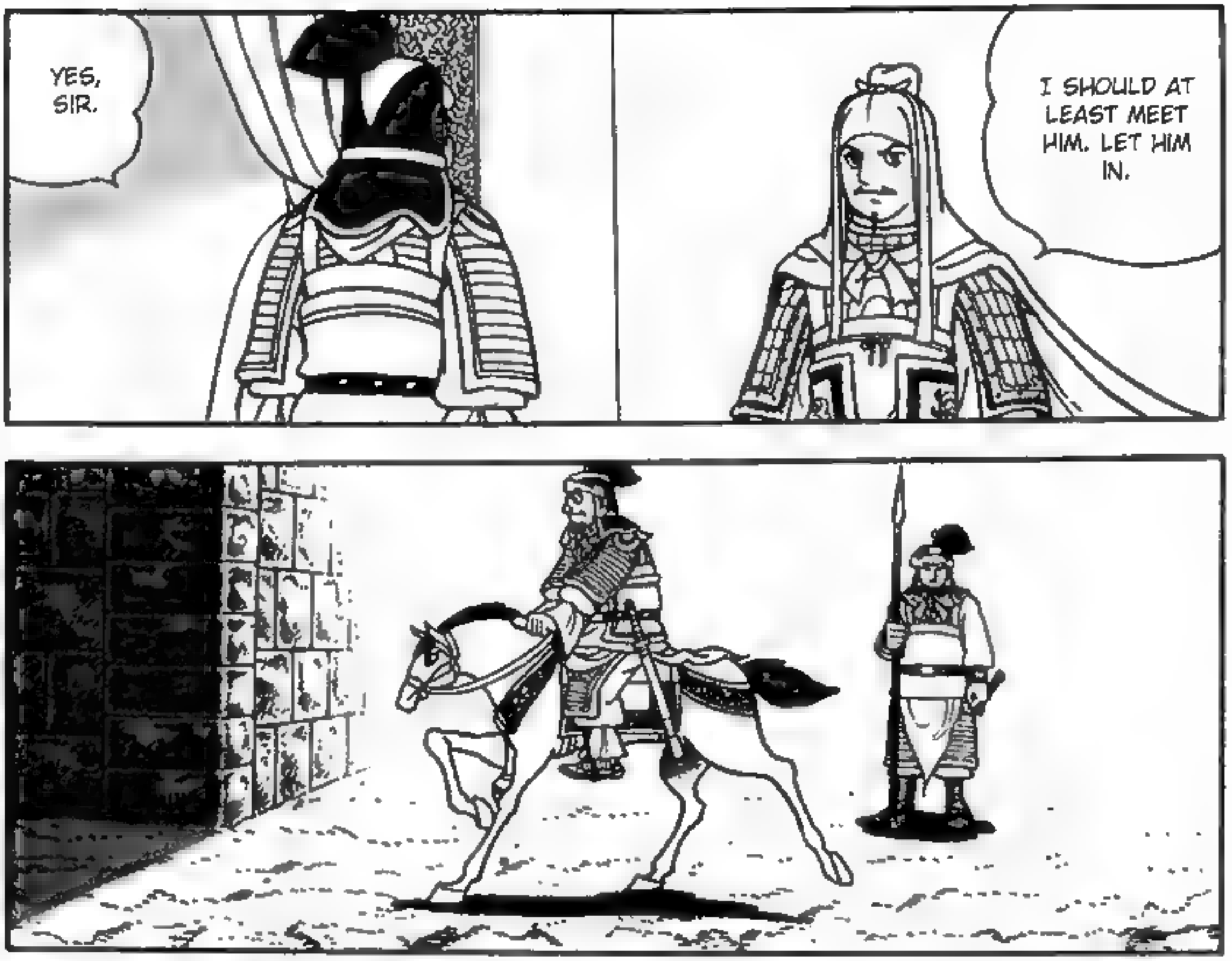
YES, IT SEEMS SIMA YI HAS EXECUTED CAO SHUANG AND OTHER PROMI-NENT MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY.

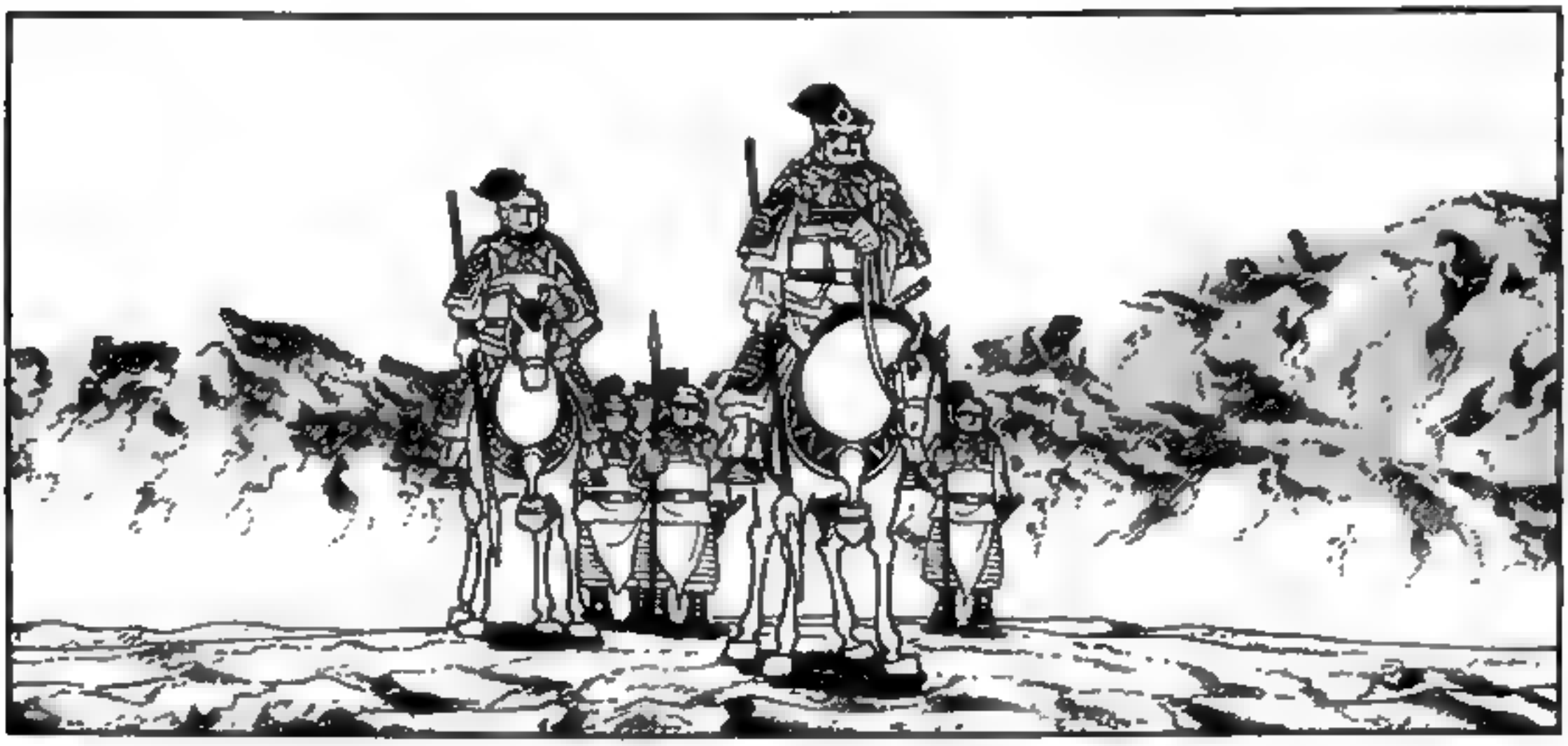
SIMA YI!?

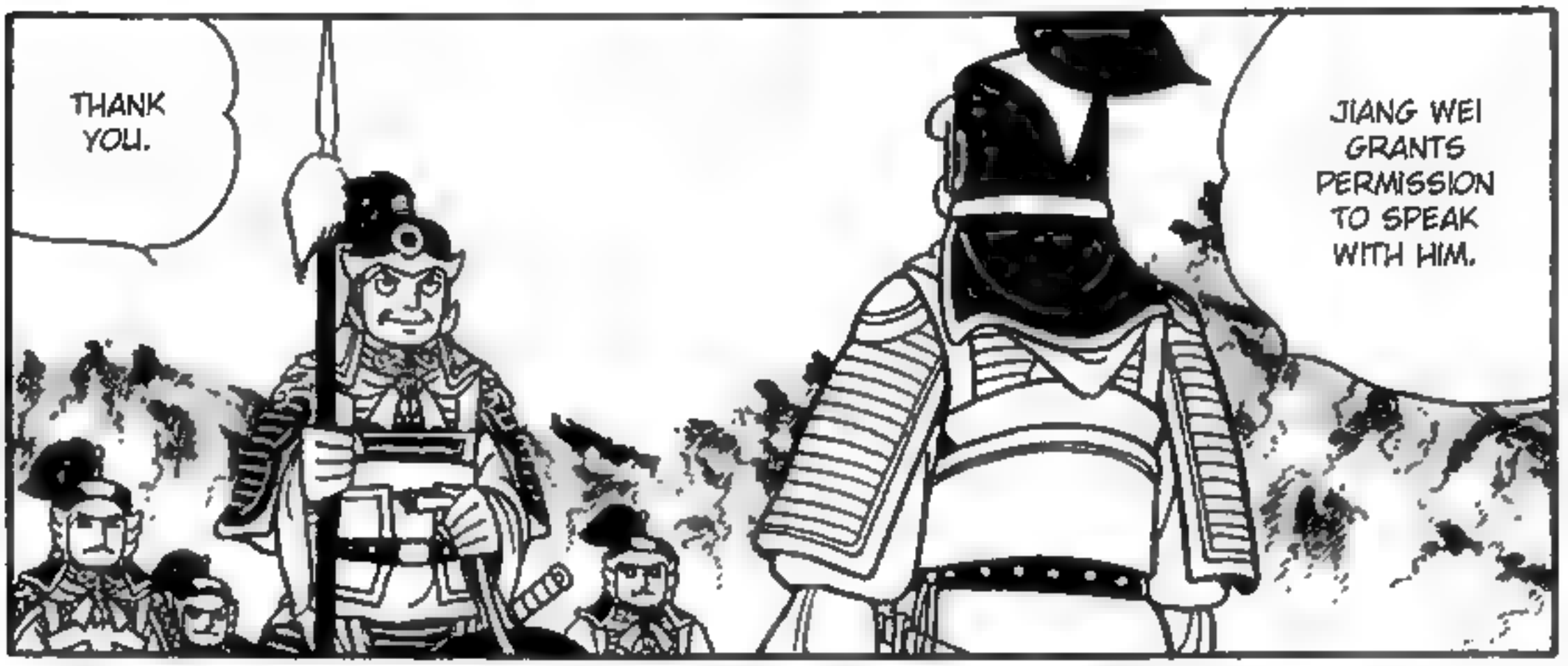
NO, WAIT!

SHOULD I CHASE HIM AWAY, SIR?

HMM, IS IT POSSIBLE THIS IS A TRAP SET BY WEI...?


YES, SIR.
I SHOULD AT LEAST MEET HIM. LET HIM IN.




THANK YOU.
JIANG WEI GRANTS PERMISSION TO SPEAK WITH HIM.

YES, THERE ARE NONE LEFT IN WEI WHO DEFIES THE SIMA CLAN.

CAO SHUANG'S FAMILY WAS EXECUTED!?

THE ONLY DESIRE BURNING IN MY HEART IS TO VANQUISH SIMA YI!

THEN I MUST POINT OUT THAT SHU WAS FOUNDED TO RESTORE THE HAN!

YES, I AM AWARE OF THAT, SIR.

IF YOU HAVE COME ONLY TO SEEK PERSONAL REVENGE, THEN YOU ARE NOT WELCOME.

THEN YOU HAVE NO OBJECTIONS EVEN IF WE WERE TO DESTROY THE WEI AND RESTORE THE HAN?

AS THE WEI EMPEROR IS STILL ONLY A CHILD, SIMA YI IS ALREADY RULING IN ALL BUT NAME, AS HE WIELDS IMPERIAL AUTHORITY AS CHANCELLOR AND REGENT. I WOULD RATHER DRAW MY BOW FOR SHU THAN TO DRAW IT FOR THIS NEW SIMA-WEI.

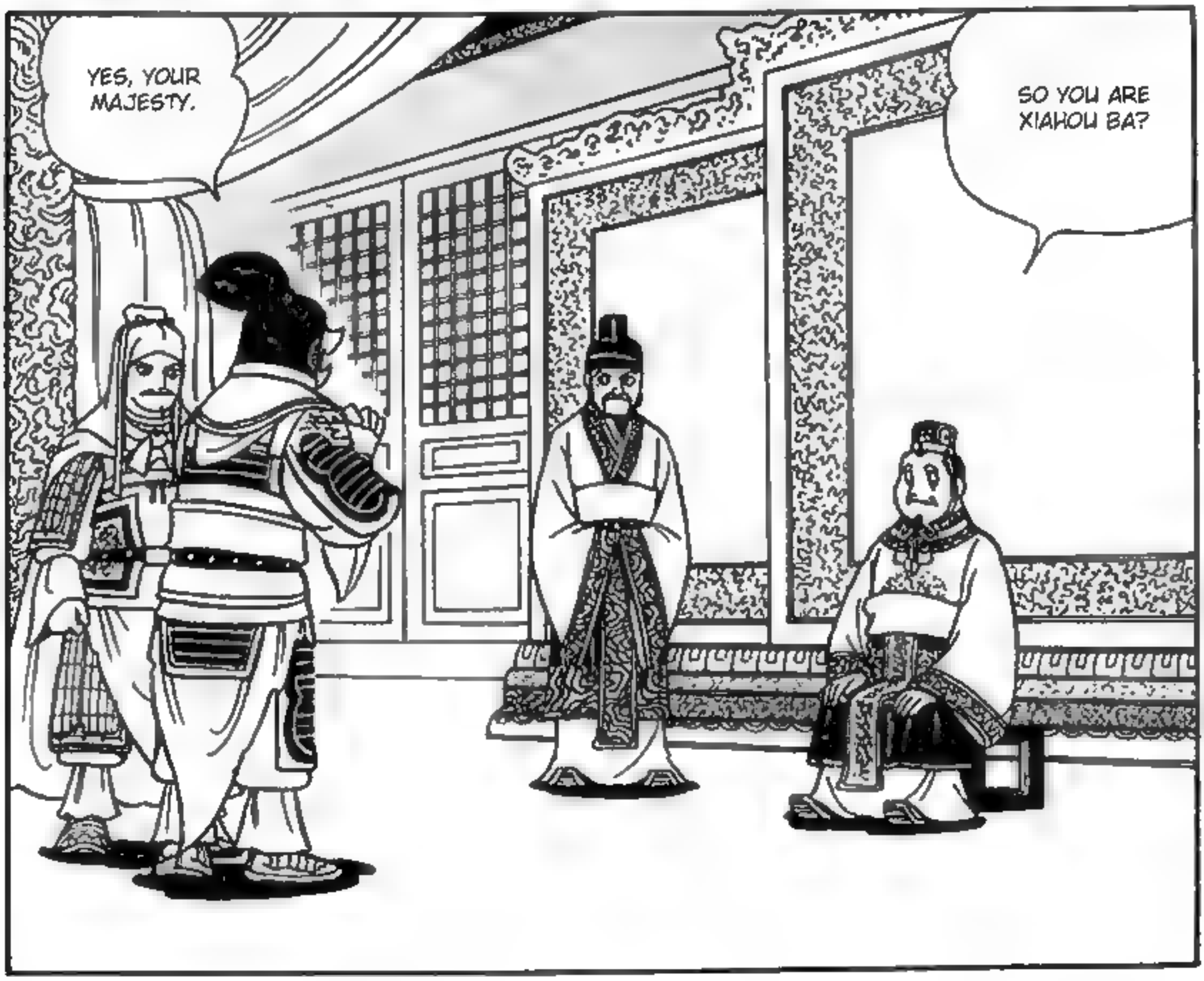
HMM...

AS LONG AS SIMA YI IS ELIMINATED IN RESTORING THE HAN, I GIVE MY COMPLETE ALLEGIANCE TO SHU.

THANK YOU, SIR.

THEN I WILL SPEAK IN YOUR FAVOUR TO THE SHU EMPEROR. IF HE CONSENTS, YOU WILL BE OUR GUIDE IN OUR FUTURE CAMPAIGNS AGAINST WEI.

THUS, JIANG WEI TOOK XIAHOU BAO TO CHENGDU


YES, YOUR MAJESTY.
SO YOU ARE XIAHOU BA?

YES, YOUR MAJESTY.

JIANG WEI INFORMED ME ABOUT YOUR STORY. SO YOU WISH TO PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO SHU AND MYSELF?

I AM HONOURED!

VERY WELL, I WILL GRANT YOUR REQUEST.

YOUR MAJESTY, THIS MAY BE HEAVEN'S SIGN THAT THE TIME IS RIGHT TO RESTART THE NORTHERN CAMPAIGNS.

WE'VE SPENT THE LAST 10 YEARS REBUILDING AND TRAINING THE TROOPS. I THINK WE ARE QUITE READY NOW.

WHY IS THAT, FEI YI?

JIANG WEI, I FEAR SUCH AN ACT IS STILL RASH.

FEI YI, YOU MUST REALIZE WE TOO, WILL NOT LIVE FOREVER. HOW CAN WE KEEP DELAYING THE VERY PURPOSE OUR STATE WAS FOUNDED FOR?

BUT AT THE SAME TIME, WE HAVE LOST KEY FIGURES SUCH AS CHANCELLORS JIANG WAN AND DONG YUN IN QUICK SUCCESSION. I THINK IT IS BETTER TO WAIT AS I DO NOT THINK WE HAVE ENOUGH ABLE HANDS IN THE GOVERNMENT RIGHT NOW.

BUT HOW CAN WE ACCOMPLISH A TASK THAT EVEN CHANCELLOR ZHUGE LIANG COULD NOT? I THINK IT UNWISE TO STAKE THE FORTUNES OF THE WHOLE EMPIRE ON A COSTLY CAMPAIGN WITH LITTLE CHANCE OF SUCCESS.

BUT WITH XIAHOU BA TO SERVE AS AN EXPERT GUIDE, WE CAN NOW TRY OTHER BOLD PLANS THAT WE COULD PREVIOUSLY NOT ATTEMPT.

CHANCELLOR ZHUGE LIANG FAILED TO RECOVER THE CENTRAL PLAINS FOR HE WAS NOT ENTIRELY KNOWLEDGEABLE WITH WEI'S LANDS AND HE WAS FIXATED ON TAKING THE SLOWEST, BUT SAFEST, APPROACH.

YOUR MAJESTY, PLEASE ALLOW ME PERMISSION TO HEAD A NORTHERN CAMPAIGN.

.....

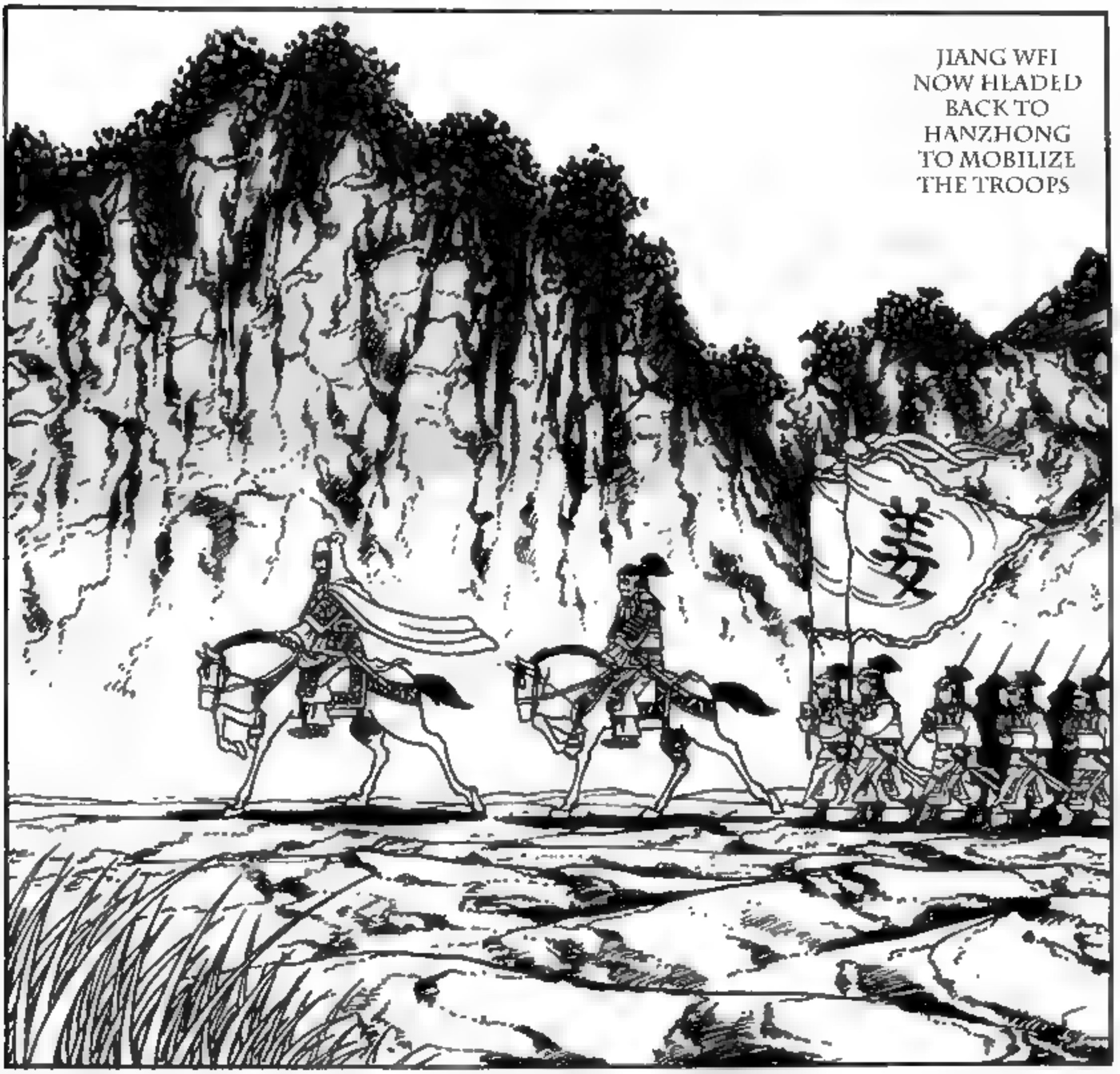
MOREOVER, AS I AM A NATIVE OF LONGSHANG, I CAN ENLIST THE AID OF THE LOCAL QIANG TRIBES. WITH THEIR HELP, EVEN IF WE FAIL TO TAKE LUOYANG, WE CAN TAKE THE LANDS WEST OF CHANG'AN.

I HEREBY GRANT YOU PERMISSION.

YOU MAKE A GOOD CASE, JIANG WEI WITH XIAHOU BA AND QIANG SUPPORT, PERHAPS YOU WILL NOT BE STUMPED AS THE MARQUIS OF ZHONGWU.

*MARQUIS OF ZHONGWU: ZHUGE LIANG'S POSTHUMOUS TITLE

THANK YOU. I SWEAR I WILL LIVE UP TO YOUR MAJESTY'S EXPECTATIONS!


JIANG WEI NOW HEADED BACK TO HANZHONG TO MOBILIZE THE TROOPS

THE HILLY PATHS THROUGH HERE MAKES IT VERY DIFFICULT TO ADVANCE OR RETREAT QUICKLY. I SUGGEST A SLOW AND CAUTIOUS MARCH.

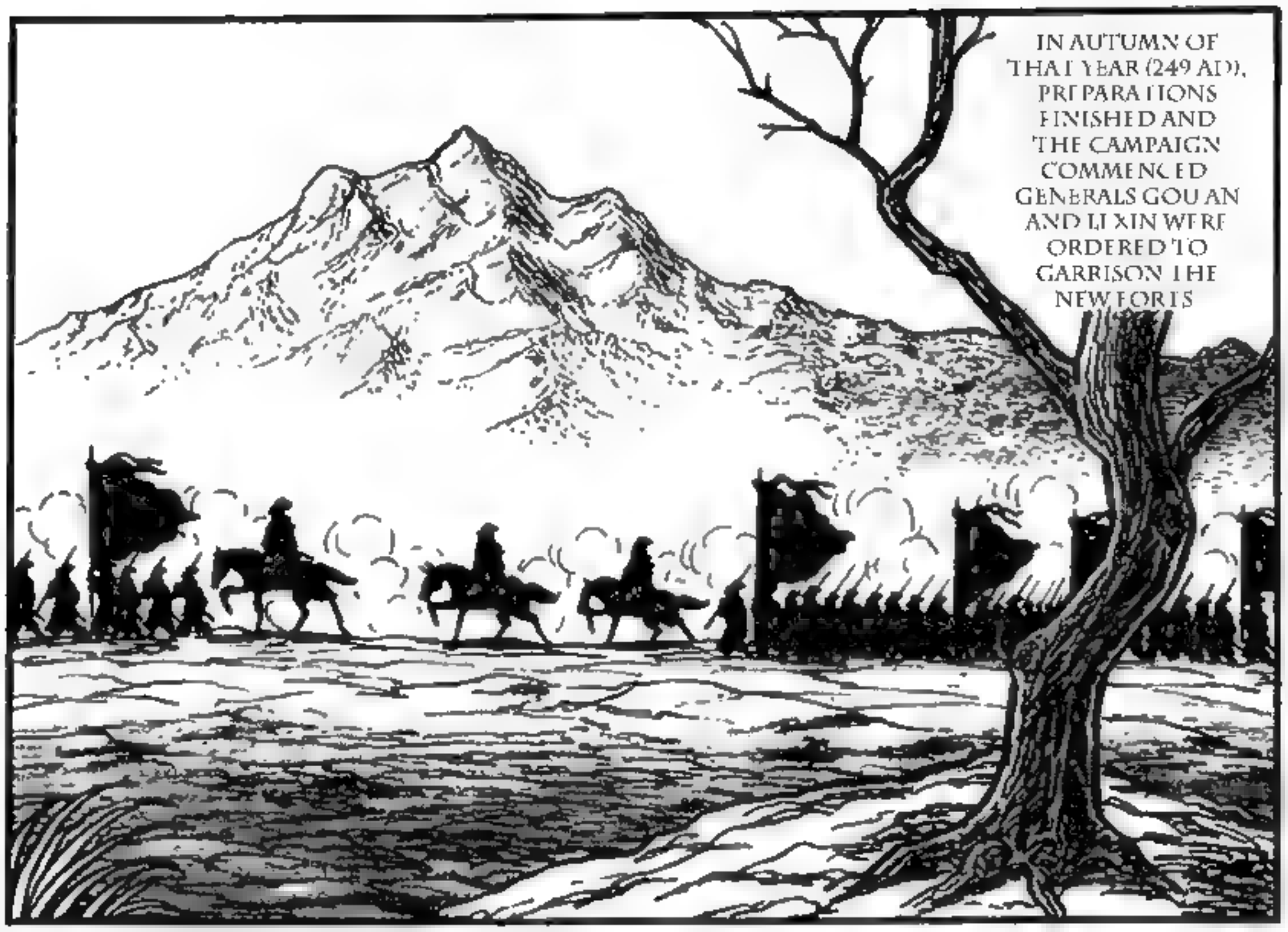
VERY WELL, WE WILL ADVANCE AS CHANCELLOR ZHUGE LIANG DID.

BUT BEFORE THAT, WE MUST BUILD TWO NEW FORTS AT THE BASE OF MT. QU TO HELP SEND OUR SUPPLIES FROM OUR BORDERS.

AFTER JOINING HANDS WITH THE QIANG TRIBES, WE SHOULD HEAD TO YONGZHOU THROUGH XIPING PASS.

TWO NEW FORTS
WERE BUILT AT
THE BASE OF MT
QU AS PLANNED.

AND EMIS
SARIES WERE
SENT TO
REQUEST
QIANG
SUPPORT


IN AUTUMN OF THAT YEAR (249 AD), PREPARATIONS FINISHED AND THE CAMPAIGN COMMENCED GENERALS GOU AN AND LI XIN WERE ORDERED TO GARRISON THE NEW FORTS

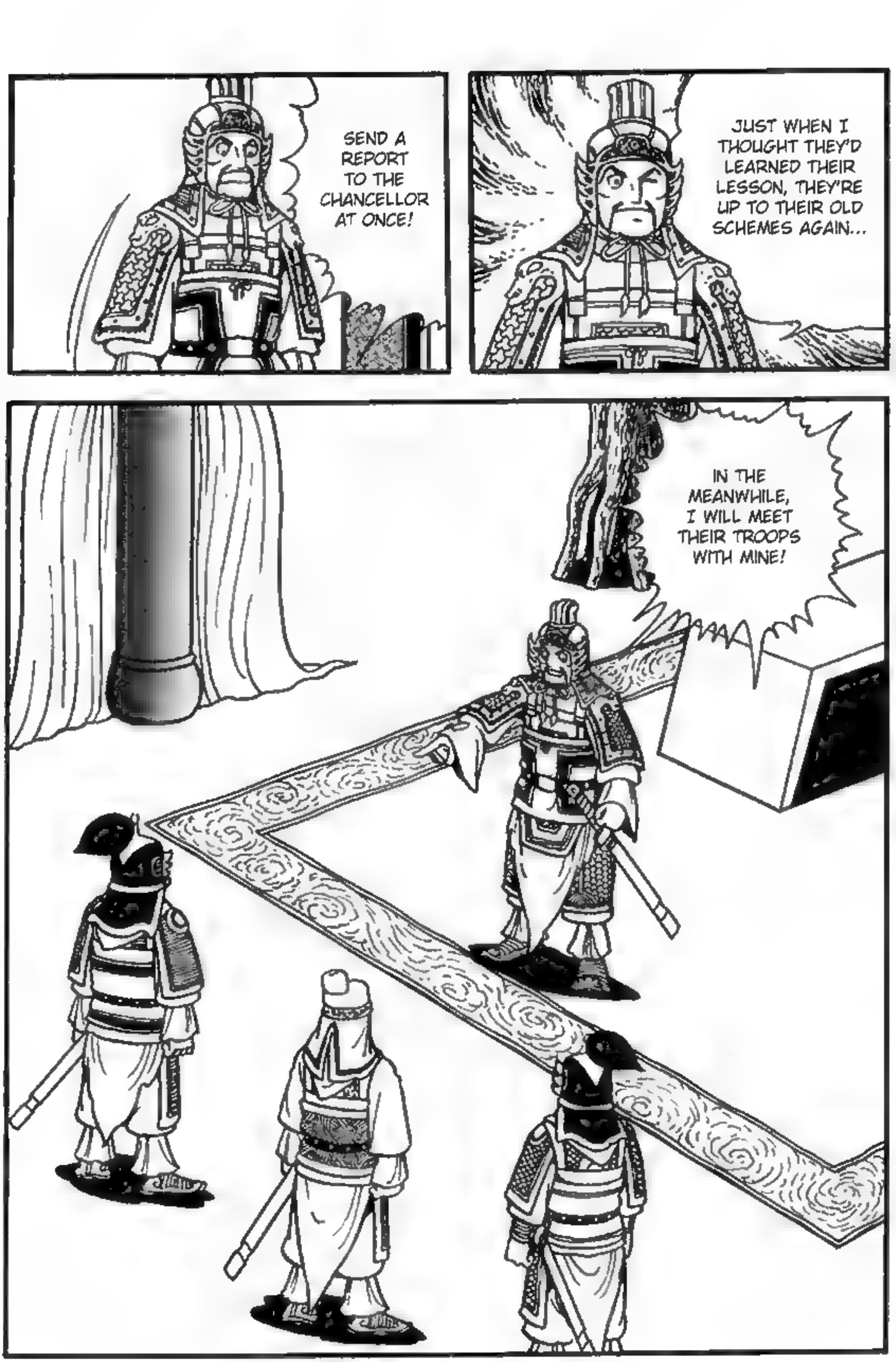
*GOU AN NOT THE SAME GOU AN WHO DEFECTED TO WEI IN VOL. 56

DRIED UP

魏
YES, THEY'VE HEAVILY GARRISONED TWO NEW FORTS AT MT. QU AND MORE SOLDIERS ARE GATHERING AT THEIR BORDERS.
SHU TROOPS ARE ON THE MOVE?

SEND A REPORT TO THE CHANCELLOR AT ONCE!

JUST WHEN I THOUGHT THEY'D LEARNED THEIR LESSON, THEY'RE UP TO THEIR OLD SCHEMES AGAIN...


IN THE MEANWHILE, I WILL MEET THEIR TROOPS WITH MINE!

GUO HUAI MARCHED FORTH WITH AN ARMY OF 50,000.

郭淮

AND LAY SIEGE TO THESE TWO FORTS

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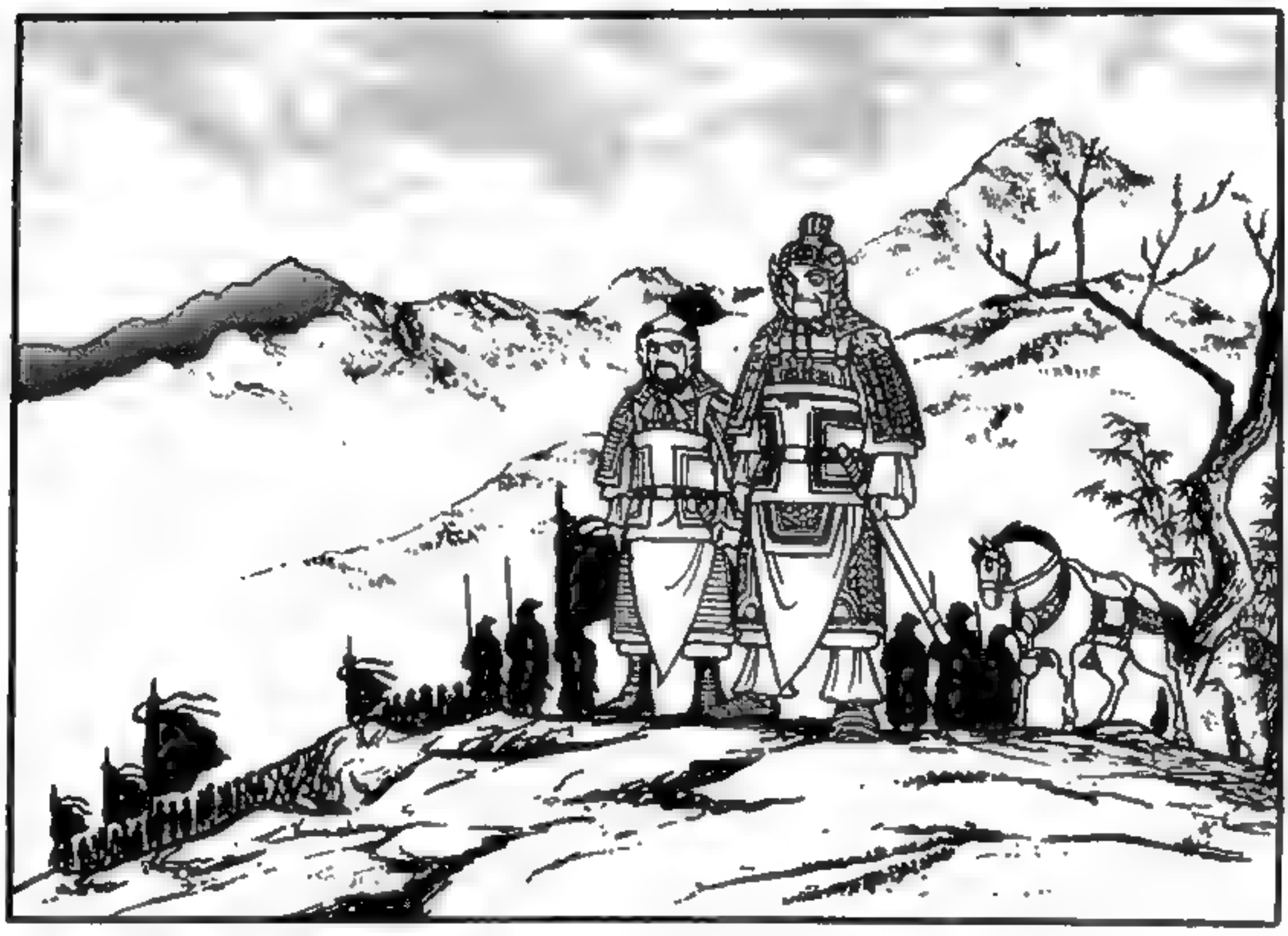


LOOK AT THAT FORT! SEE HOW HIGH THE GROUND IT'S BUILT ON IS?

WHAT IS SO PLEASING, GENERAL?
HAHAHA! SPLENDID!

AH, YOU'RE RIGHT, SIR!

SUPPLYING A FORT LIKE THAT WITH ENOUGH WATER IS NO EASY TASK.

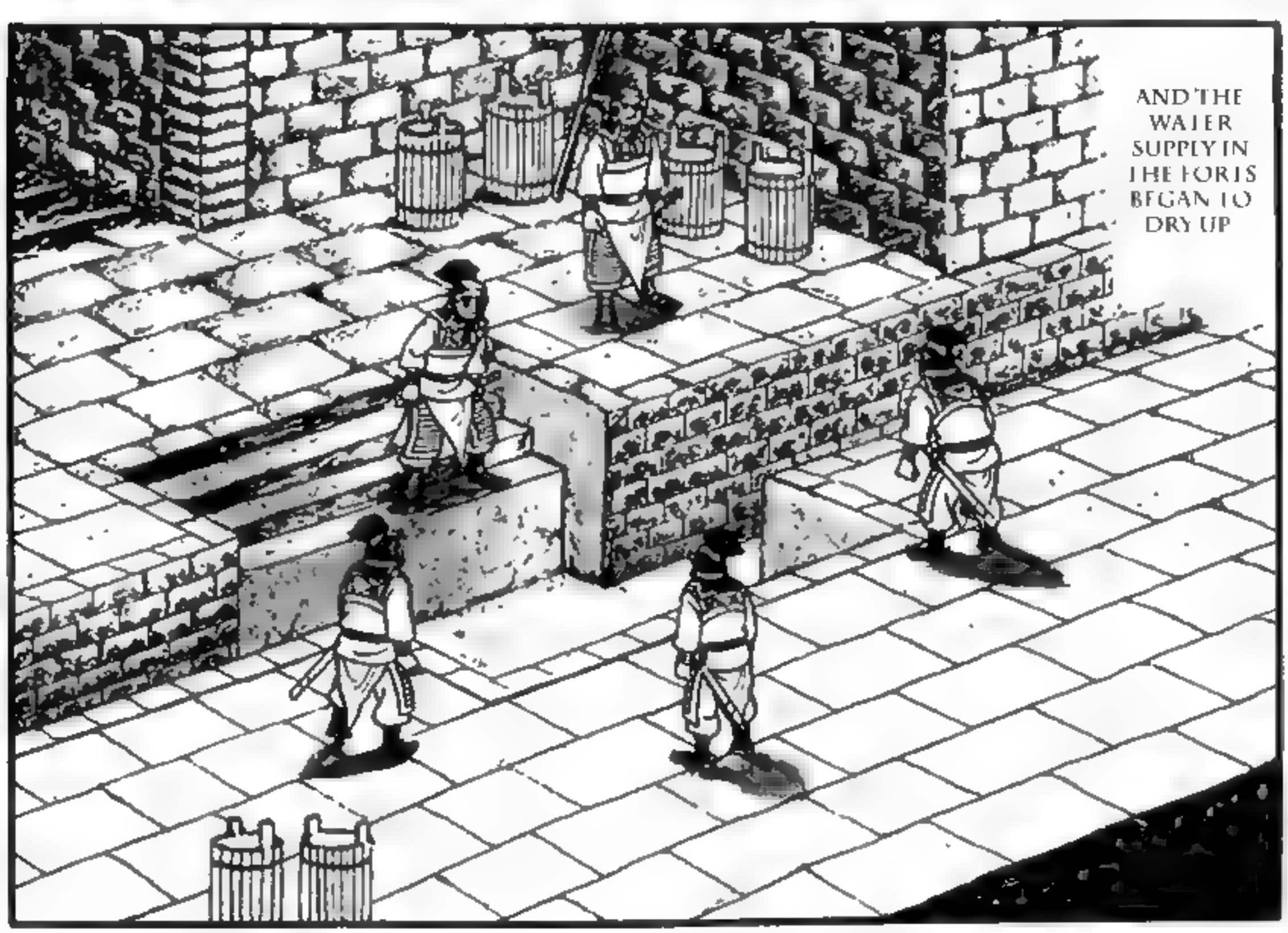
A BRILLIANT PLAN, GENERAL!

IF WE BLOCK THE NEARBY RIVER UPSTREAM FROM HERE, THE ENEMIES WILL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO CHALLENGE US OUTSIDE THEIR WALLS.

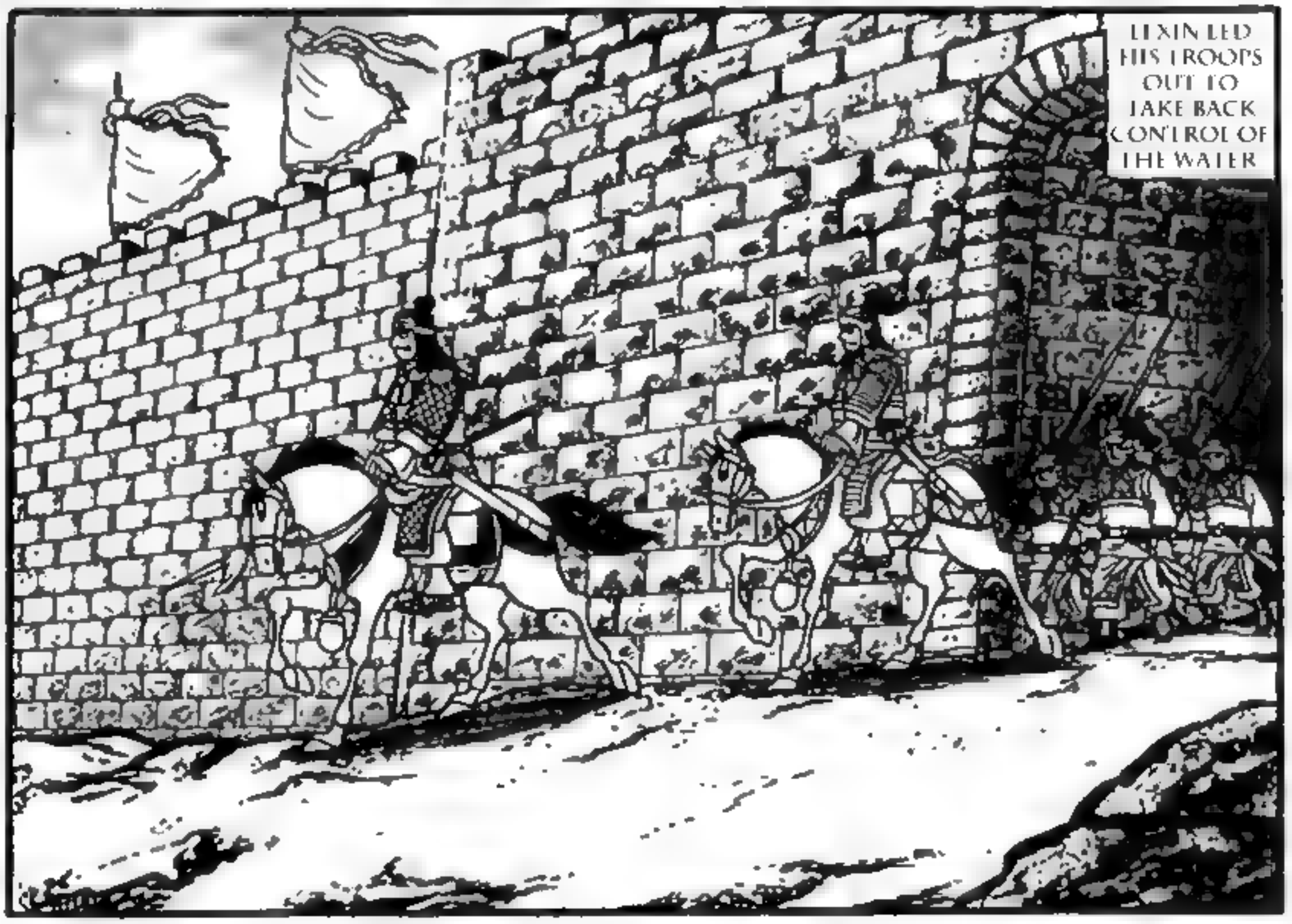
YES, SIR.

GET THE TROOPS TO DAM UP THE RIVER AT ONCE!

BEFORE LONG, THE WEI TROOPS DAMMED UP THE RIVER.


AND THE WATER SUPPLY IN THE FORTS BEGAN TO DRY UP

THEN WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO FIGHT OUTSIDE OUR WALLS.
YES, SIR.
HM...
SIR, OUR WATER SUPPLY IS BLOCKED. WE CANNOT LAST EVEN A FEW DAYS WITHOUT ANY WATER.


LIXIN LED HIS TROOPS OUT TO TAKE BACK CONTROL OF THE WATER

HM?

WE MUST MOVE THESE ROCKS!

SO THE ENEMIES DID DAM UP THE RIVER...

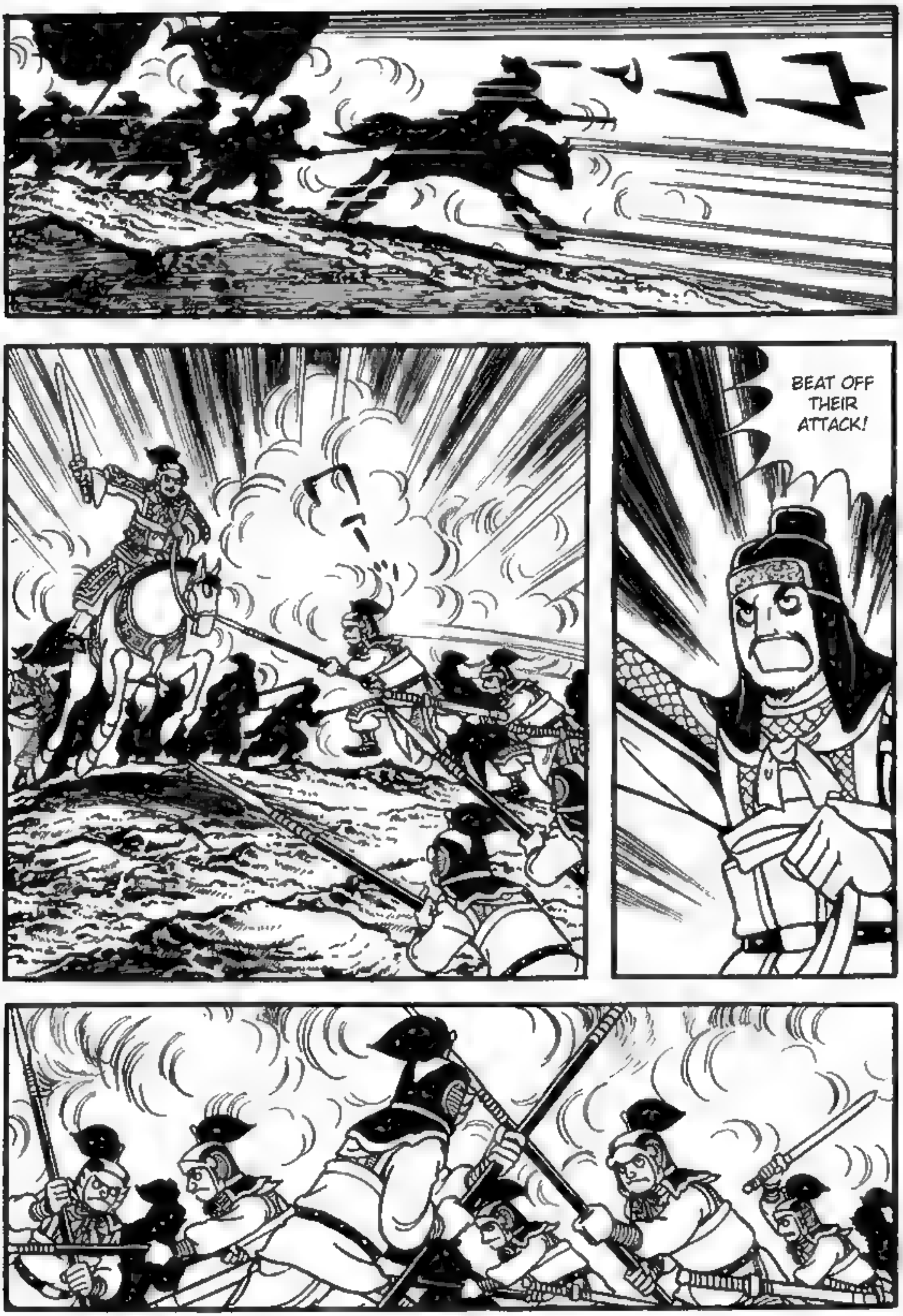
UGHH!

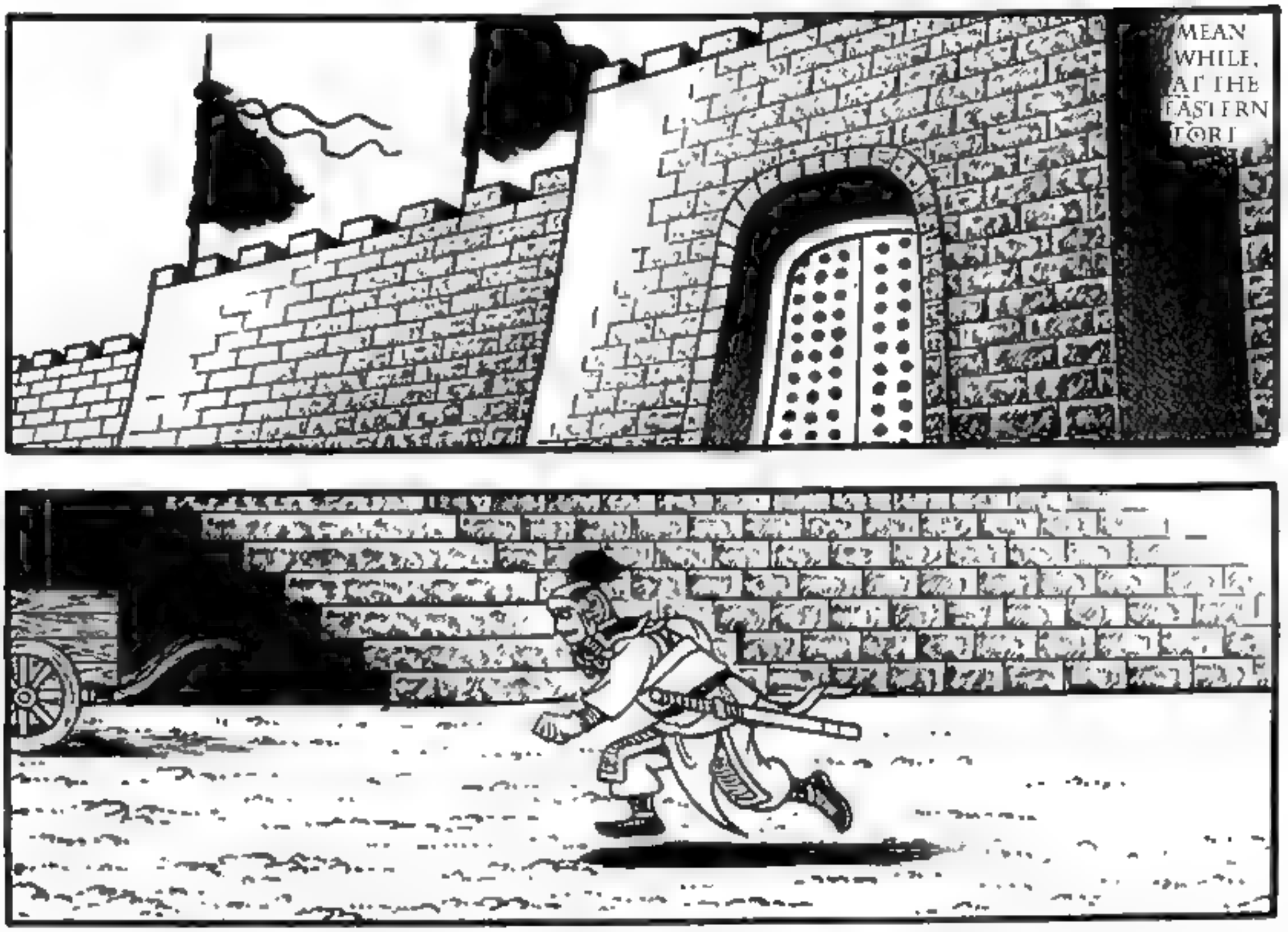
AGH!

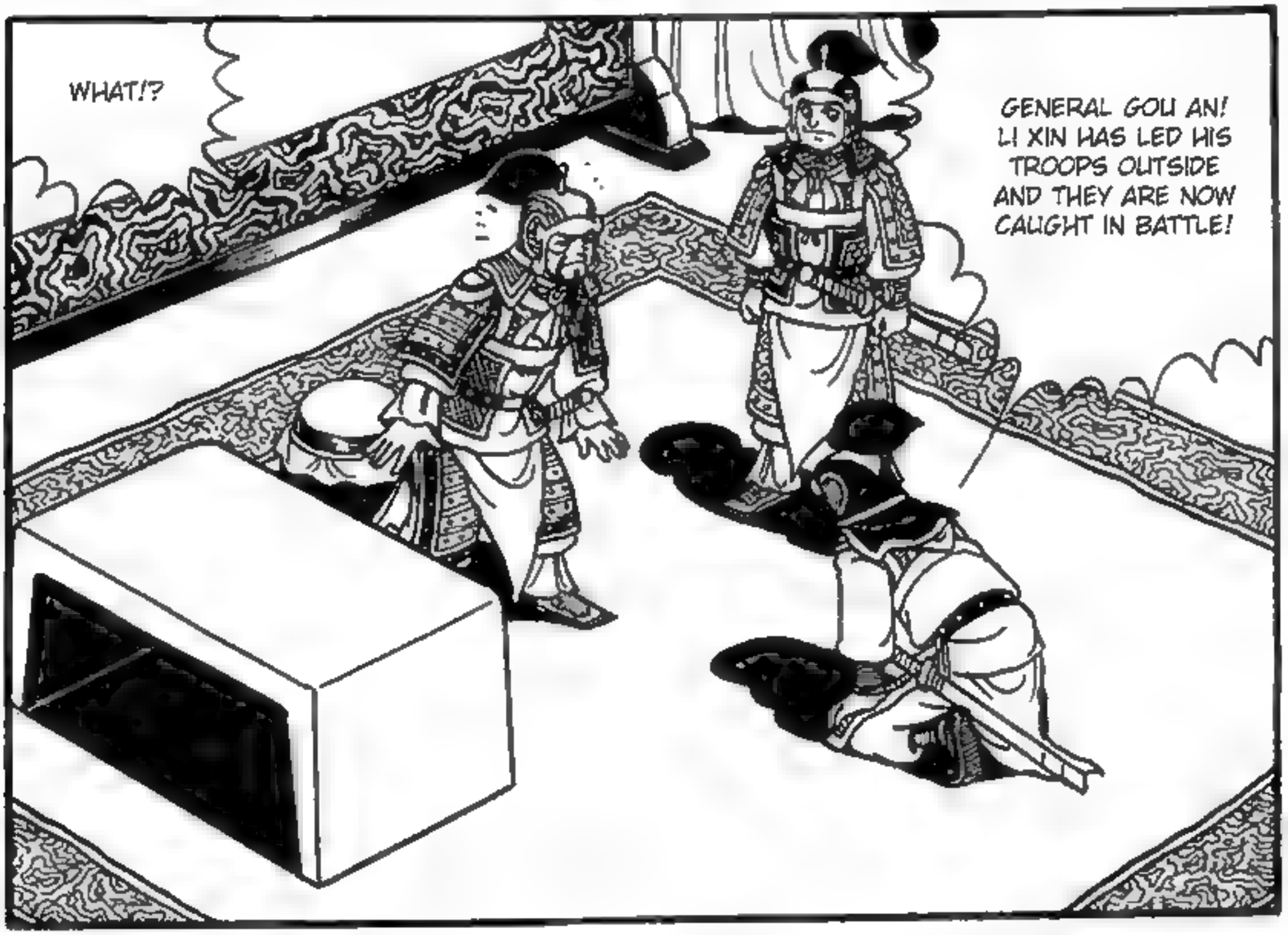
HAHAHA! SO YOU'VE FINALLY CRAWLED OUT FROM YOUR WALLS!

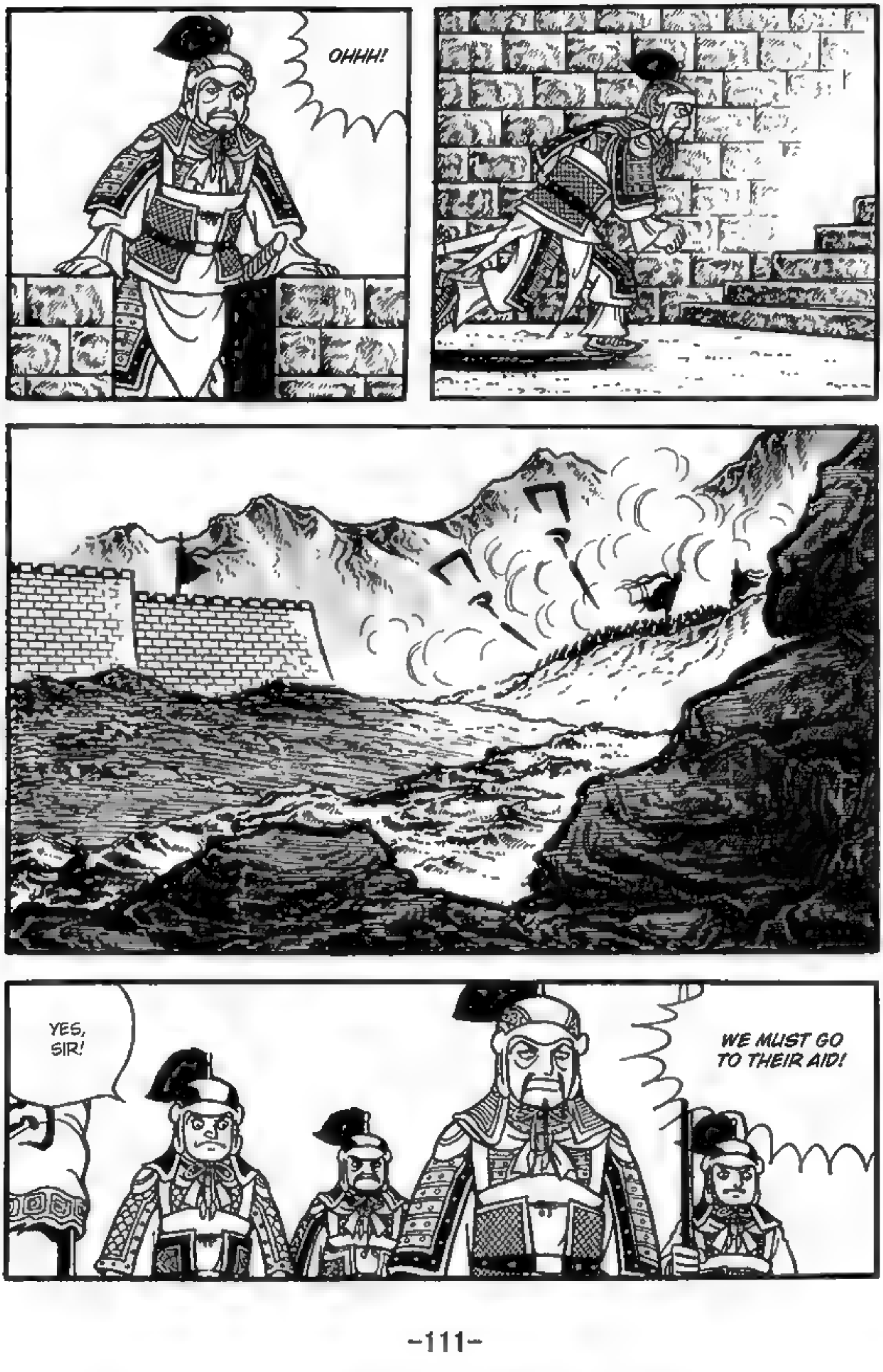
WHAT!

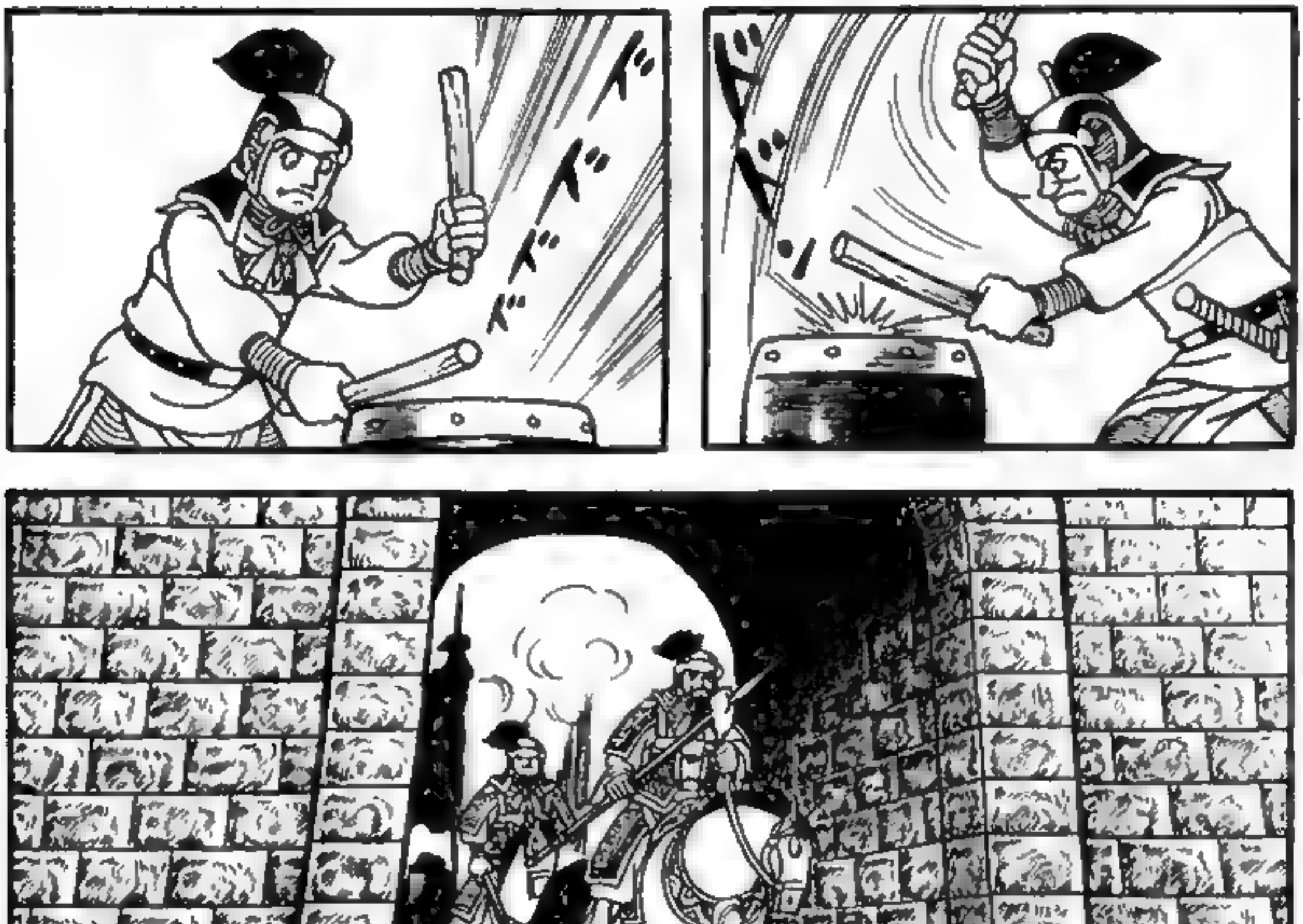
KILL EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM!


BEAT OFF THEIR ATTACK!


MEAN
WHILE,
AT THE
EASTERN
GATE


WHAT!?
GENERAL GOU AN! LI XIN HAS LED HIS TROOPS OUTSIDE AND THEY ARE NOW CAUGHT IN BATTLE!


OHHH!
YES, SIR!
WE MUST GO TO THEIR AID!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ATTACK!

EXCELLENT, THE OTHER SIDE IS COMING OUT TOO.

GOU AN!?
LI XINI

WE'RE ALL OUT TOO. I WAS WORRYING ABOUT WHAT TO DO WHEN I SAW YOU INVOLVED IN BATTLE.

HOW'S THE WATER SUPPLY AT YOUR FORT!?

YES.

SOUNDS LIKE A DECENT PLAN. WILL YOU GO NOW?

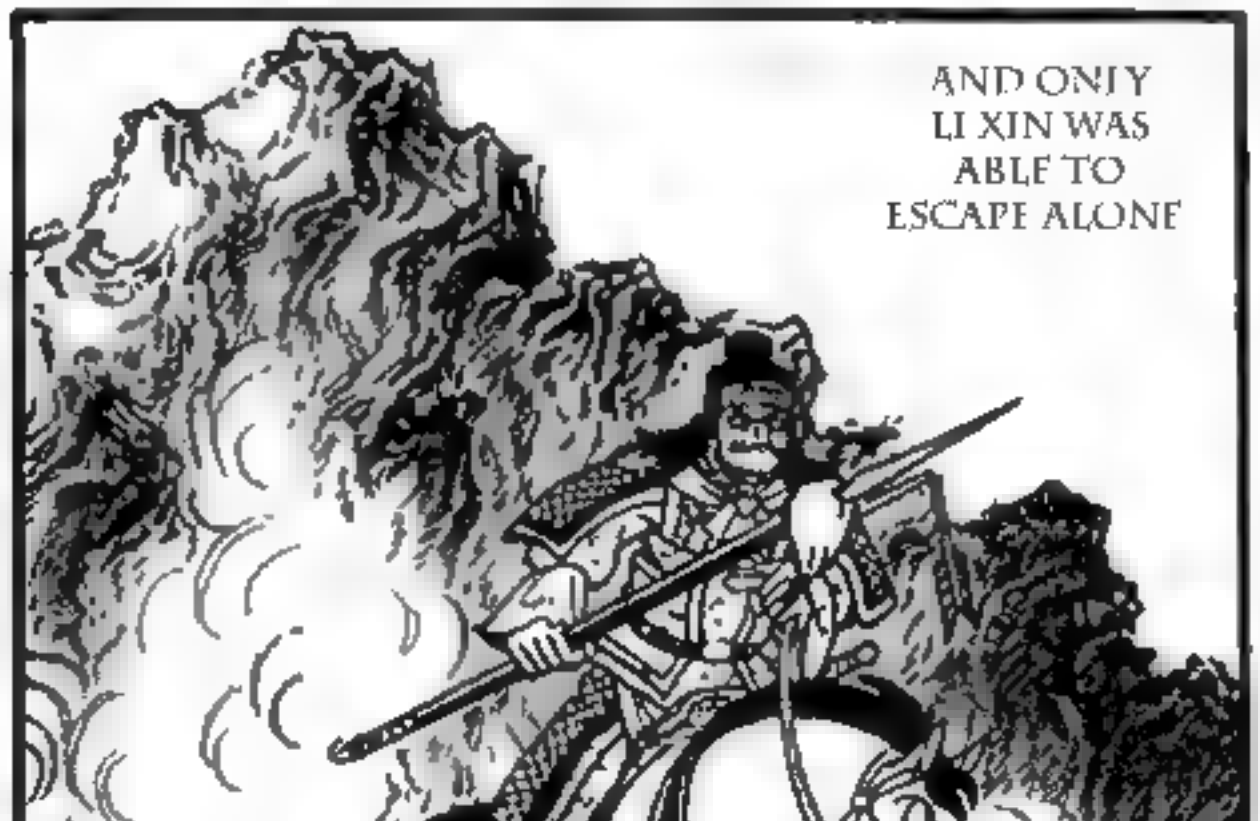
WE CANNOT DEFEND WITHOUT WATER. I WILL TRY TO BREAK THROUGH THE ENEMY ENCIRCLEMENT TO CONTACT COMMANDER JIANG WEI FOR REINFORCEMENTS. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

FINE. I'LL TRY MY BEST TO HOLD OUT AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.

I'M AFRAID I'LL HAVE TO LEAVE YOU HERE ALONE.

MEN! LET US BREAK FREE FROM HERE AND REQUEST REINFORCEMENTS! THE FATE OF GOU AN'S TROOPS COUNT ON IT!

BUT BREAKING THROUGH THE ENCIR-CLEMENT WAS NO EASY TASK


AND ONLY LI XIN WAS ABLE TO ESCAPE ALONE

ONE BY ONE,

LI XIN'S OFFICERS FELL,

LI XIN RODE FOR THREE DAYS.
AHH!

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COMMANDER JIANG WEI!

IT'S THE COM-MANDER!

LI XIN? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? AND WHY ARE YOU INJURED?

COMMANDER JIANG WEI!

THE WATER SUPPLY WAS CUT OFF!?

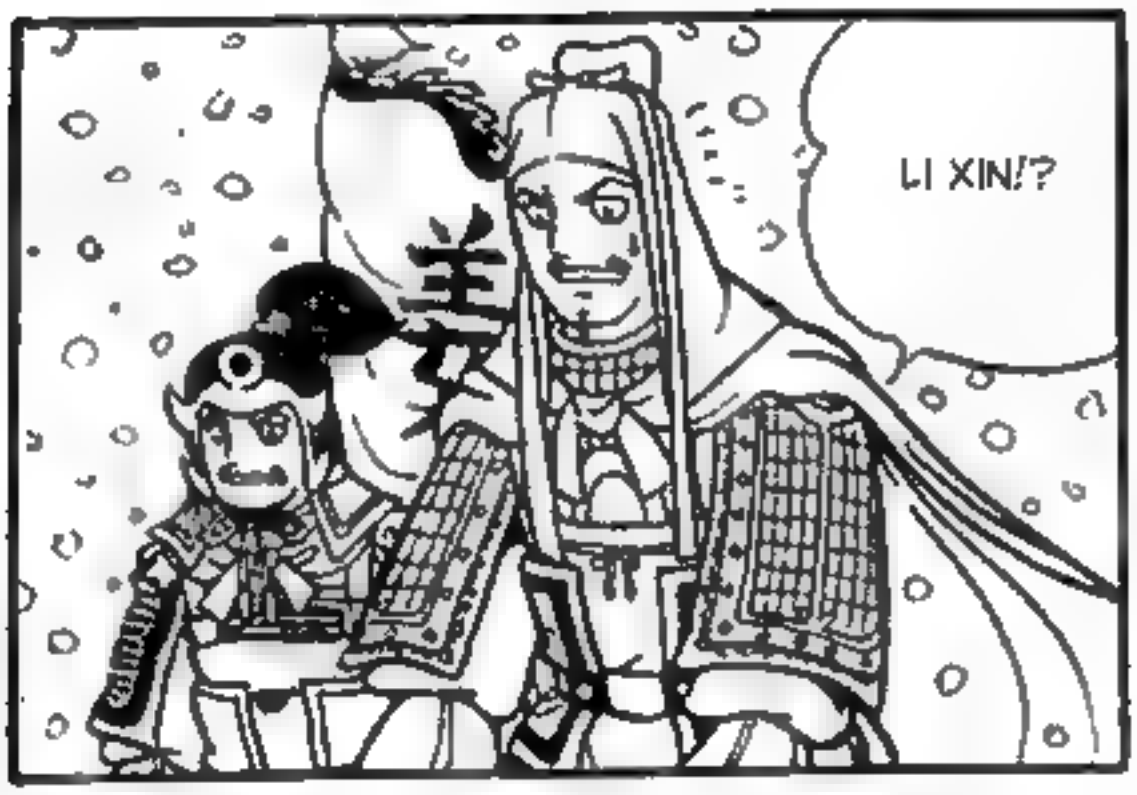
THE TWO FORTS AT MT. QU HAVE BEEN LAID SIEGE BY A WEI ARMY OF 50,000. THE ENEMIES CUT OFF OUR WATER SUPPLY SO I DESPERATELY BROKE THROUGH THEIR ENCIRCLEMENT TO REACH YOU AND REQUEST REINFORCEMENTS!

THE FORTS CANNOT HOLD MUCH LONGER, SIR. YOU MUST SEND AID AT ONCE!

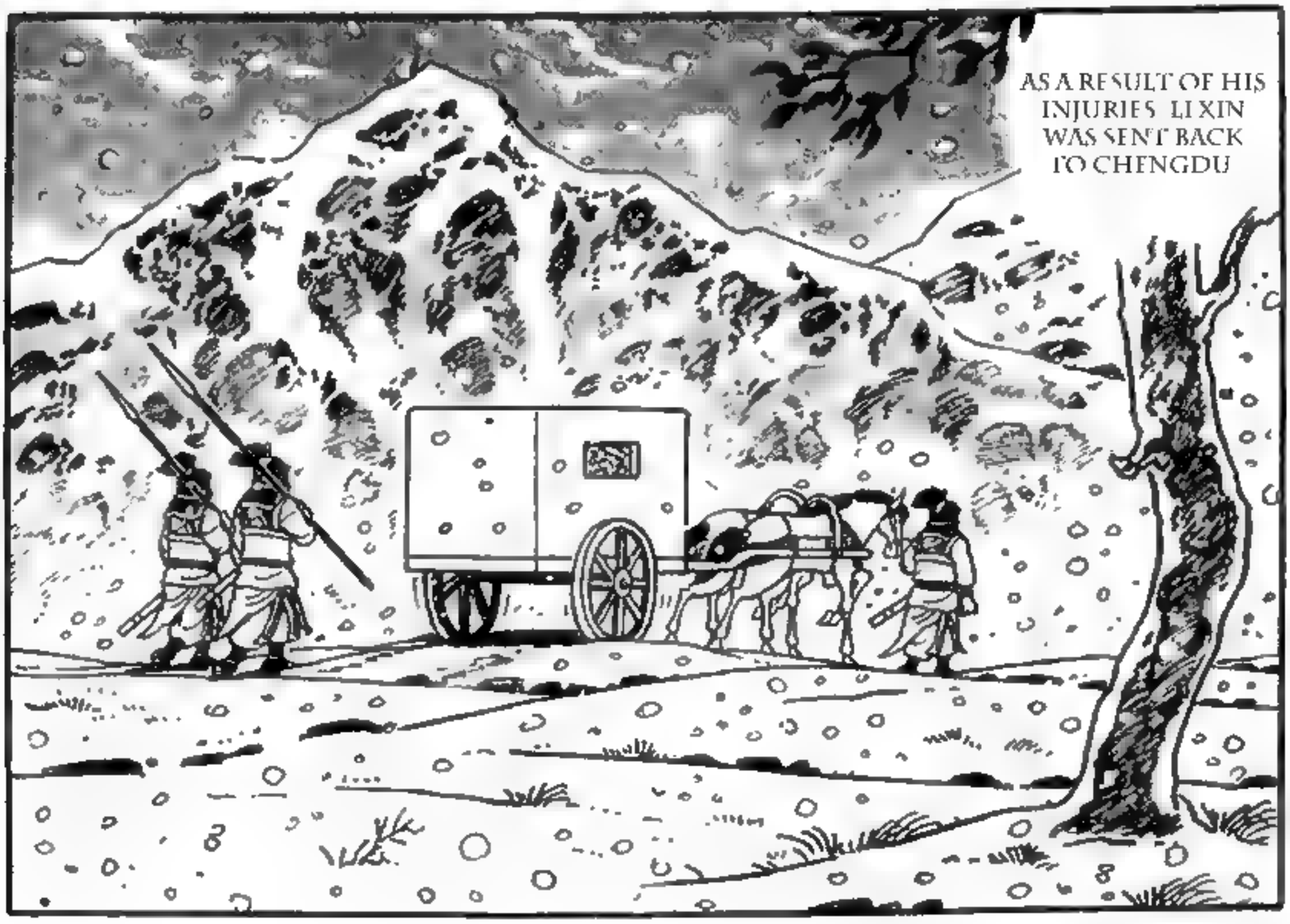
CURSES, I HAD PLANS TO FIRST JOIN UP WITH THE QIANG TROOPS...

YES, SIR.

YES, I UNDERSTAND. I WILL FIGURE SOMETHING OUT.


LI XIN!?

ATTEND TO HIS WOUNDS AT ONCE!


AS A RESULT OF HIS INJURIES LI XIN WAS SENT BACK TO CHENGDU

IF WEI IS LAYING SIEGE WITH AN ARMY OF 50,000 ALREADY, THEN YONGZHOU MUST BE UNDEFENDED.

IF WE DO NOT RUSH TO THOSE FORTS, THEY WILL SOON FALL TO ENEMY HANDS. WHAT DO YOU THINK, XIAHOU BA?

EXCELLENT. WE WILL TAKE YONGZHOU AND RELIEVE THE SIEGE IN ONE STROKE!

IF WE GO STRAIGHT THROUGH OX HEAD HILLS, THEN WE CAN COME AROUND TO THE REAR OF YONGZHOU. ONCE GUO HUAI LEARNS THAT YONGZHOU IS IN DANGER, HE WILL NATURALLY ABANDON THE SIEGE, BUT IF ALL GOES WELL, HE WILL NOT RETURN IN TIME TO PREVENT OUR CAPTURE OF YONGZHOU.

LET US HEAD THROUGH OX HEAD HILLS AT ONCE!

THUS, RATHER
THAN DIRECTLY
HEADING TO THE
FORTS, JIANG WEI
ORDERED AN
ADVANCE TO OX
HEAD HILLS

BATTLE OF OX HEAD HILLS

IT IS STRANGE THAT NO ENEMY ARMY HAS COME YET TO LIFT OUR SIEGE OF THESE FORTS.

WHAT IS IT, CHEN TAI?

THERE IS ANOTHER MATTER THAT CONCERNS ME MORE, HOWEVER, SIR.

IF SO, THE ENEMIES WILL PROBABLY TAKE THE ROAD AT OX HEAD HILLS TO EVENTUALLY STRIKE OUR REAR.

OUR SPIES REPORT THAT THE ENEMIES MADE CONTACT WITH JIANG WEI'S ARMY. IF HE'S NOT HEADING DIRECTLY HERE, THEN I FEAR HE IS PLANNING TO SEIZE YONGZHOU WHILE WE'VE LEFT IT DEFENSELESS.

ALLOW ME TO GO TO OX HEAD HILLS AND COUNTER THE ENEMIES WHILE YOU GAIN CONTROL OF THE TAO RIVER TO THREATEN THE ENEMY'S SUPPLY ROUTE.

YES, THAT'S CERTAINLY A MORE THAN LIKELY POSSIBILITY.

VERY WELL. WE WILL SPLIT OUR FORCES IN HALF THEN.

HMM, YES, THAT'S A SOUND PLAN.

THUS, GUO HUAI SECRETLY LEFT FOR THE TAO RIVER WHILE CHEN TAI HURRIED TO OX HEAD HILLS.

WE'VE REACHED OX HEAD HILLS, SIR.

GOOD WE WILL MAKE CAMP THERE.

姜
姜
LET US RESUME OUR MARCH!
姜

HUH?

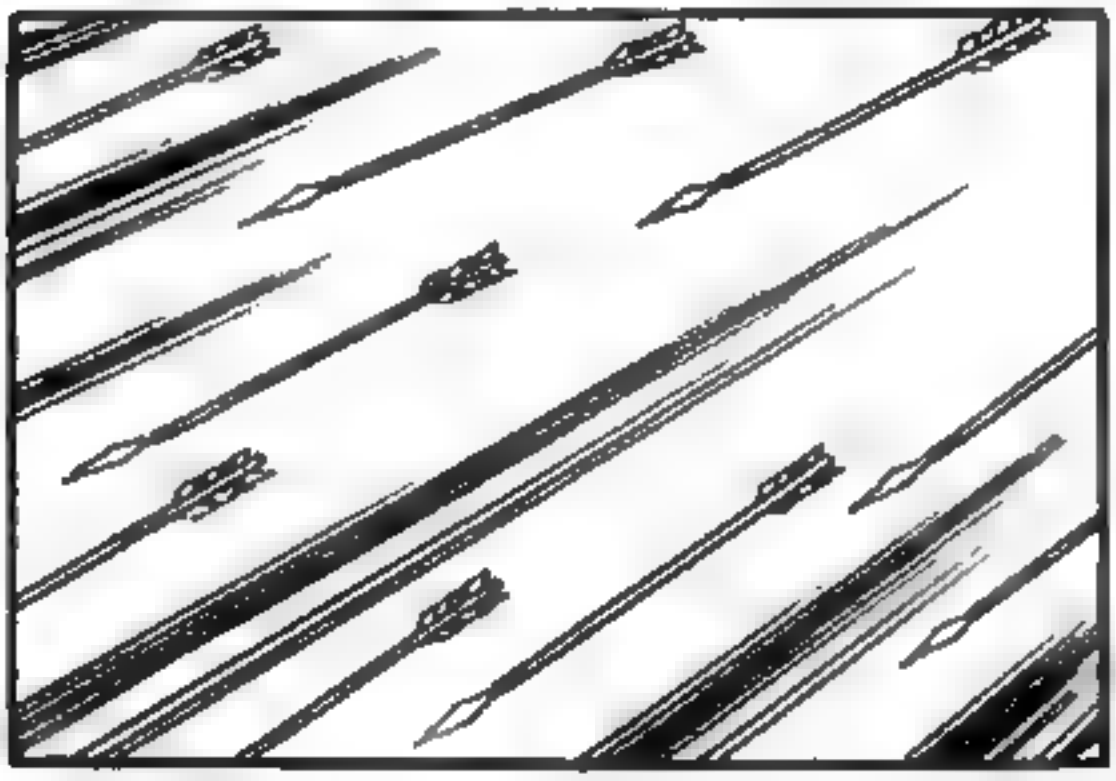
AH!

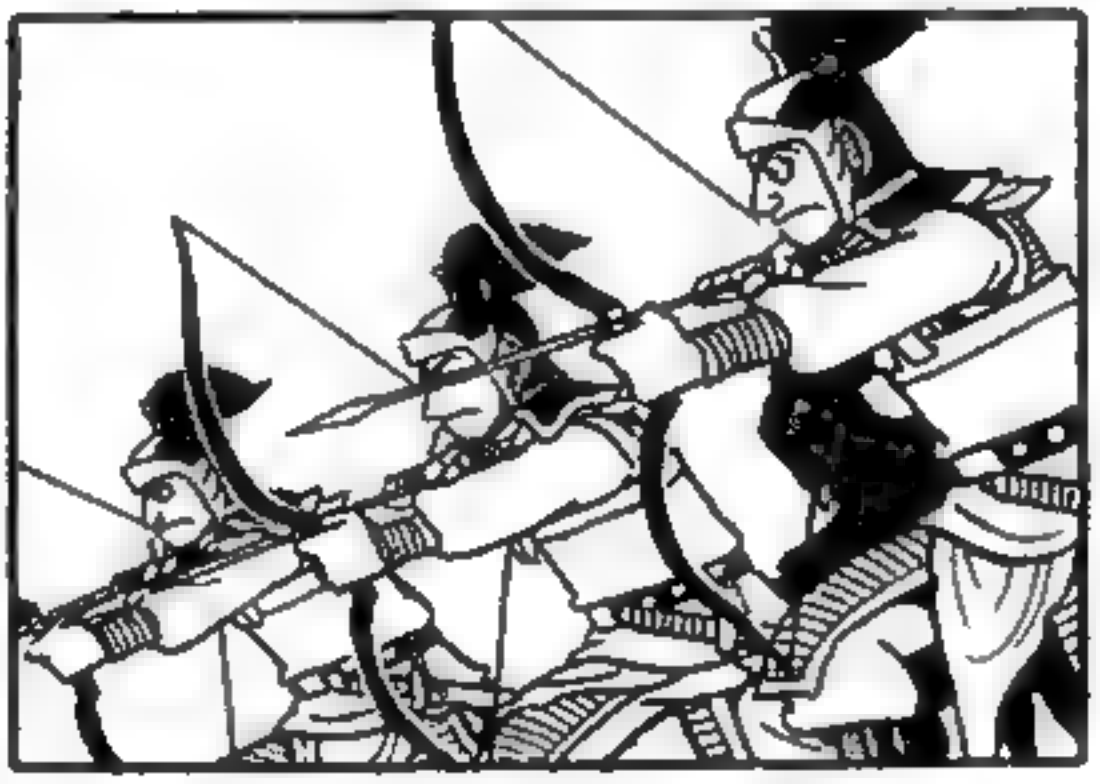
JIANG WEI! DID YOU THINK WE WOULD JUST LET YOU WALTZ INTO YONGZHOU!?

ATTACK!

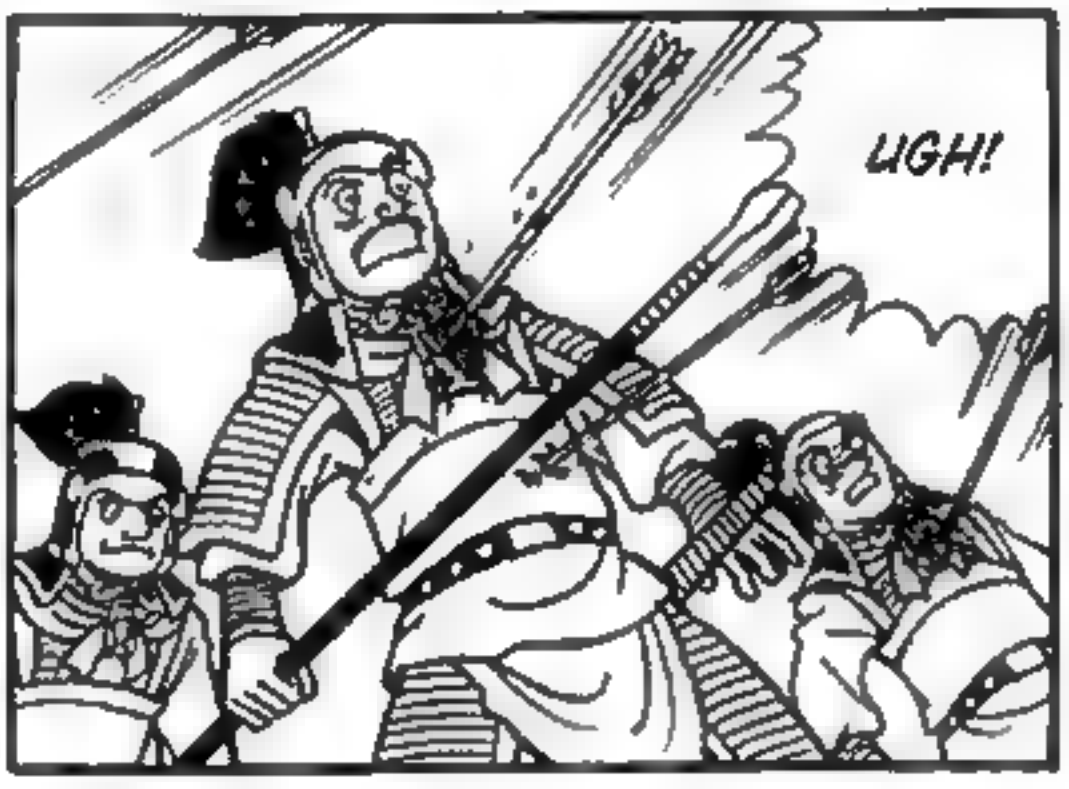
ENEMY TROOPS? HERE!?

ATTACK!

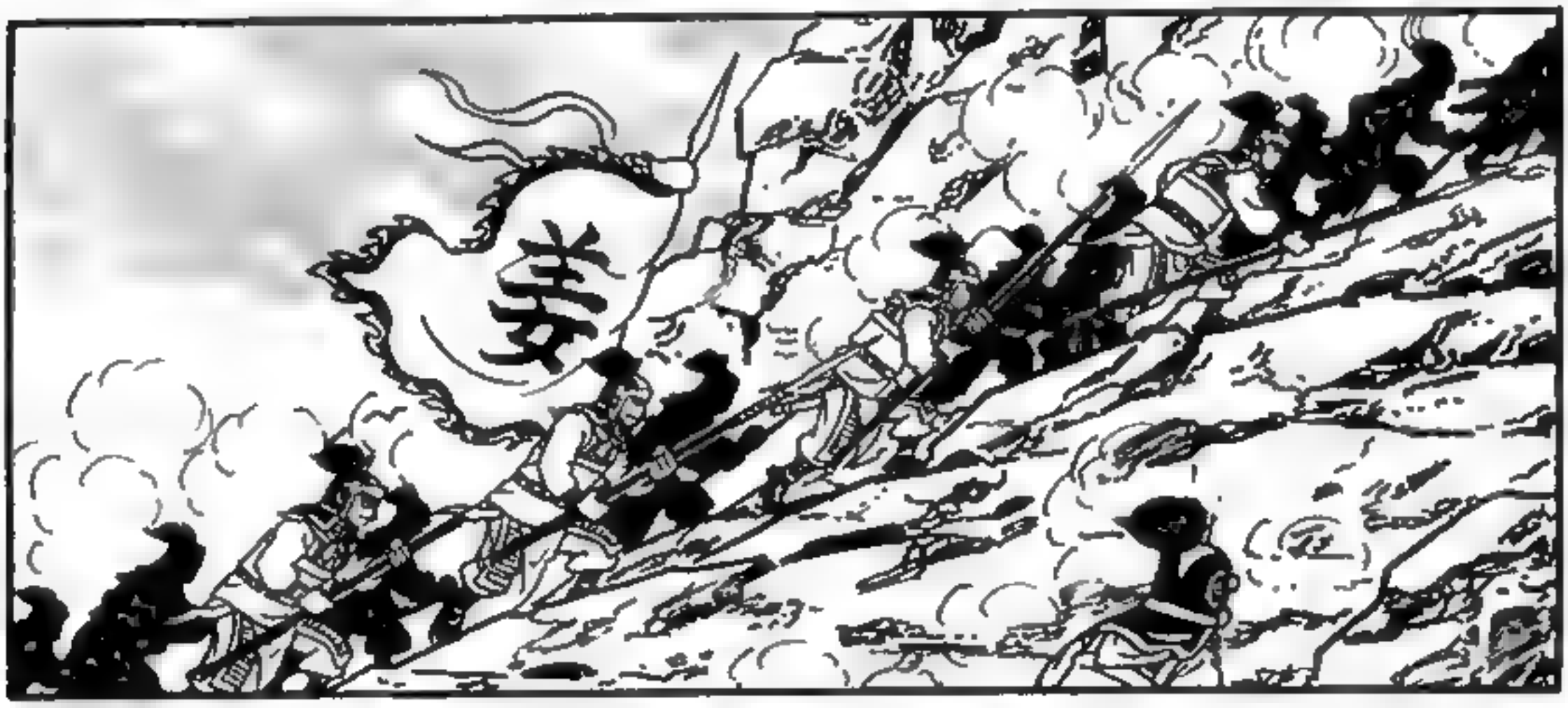




AGHH!


UGH!

DO NOT FALTER! KEEP UP THE ATTACK!



GAHH!

AHHH!

AGHH!

NGHH!
FALL BACK!

SURROUND THE HILLS INSTEAD!

JIANG WEI SET UP CAMP AT THE BASE OF OX HEAD HILLS.
AND DAILY CHALLENGED THE WEI ARMY FOR CONTROL OF THE HILLS

BUT THE FORTIFIED WEI TROOPS WERE NOT EASILY DISLODGED

YES, I'M BEGINNING TO THINK SO TOO.
SIR, OUR BASE HERE IS UNSUITED FOR A DRAWN-OUT BATTLE. I RECOMMEND WITHDRAWING AND FORMING A NEW STRATEGY.

WHAT IS IT?

EXCUSE ME, SIR!

WHAT!?

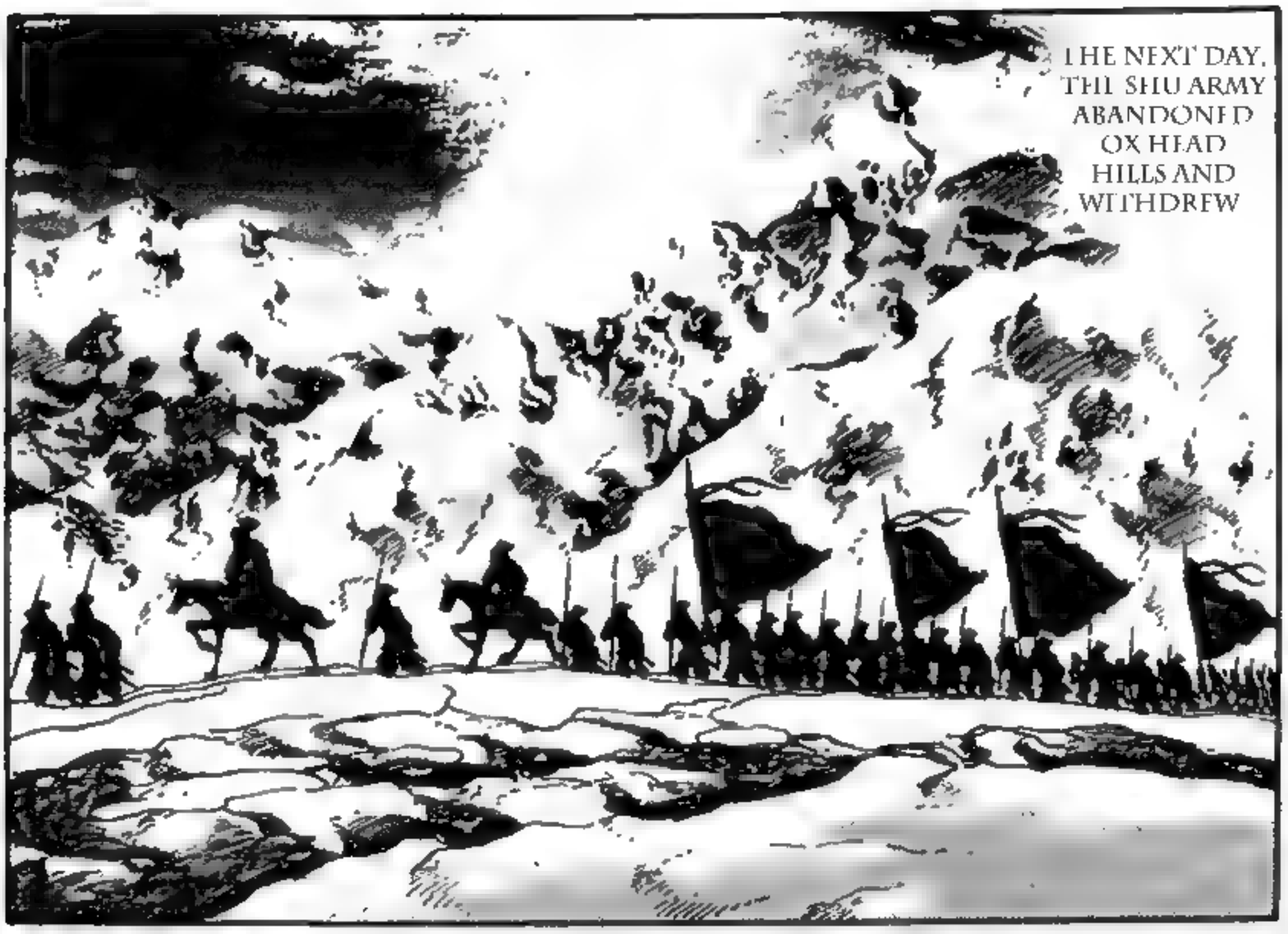
ENEMY TROOPS LED BY GUO HUAI HAVE SEIZED CONTROL OF THE TAO RIVER AND THREATEN OUR SUPPLY ROUTES!

WE MUST WITHDRAW FROM HERE AT ONCE, SIR.

THIS IS VERY BAD...

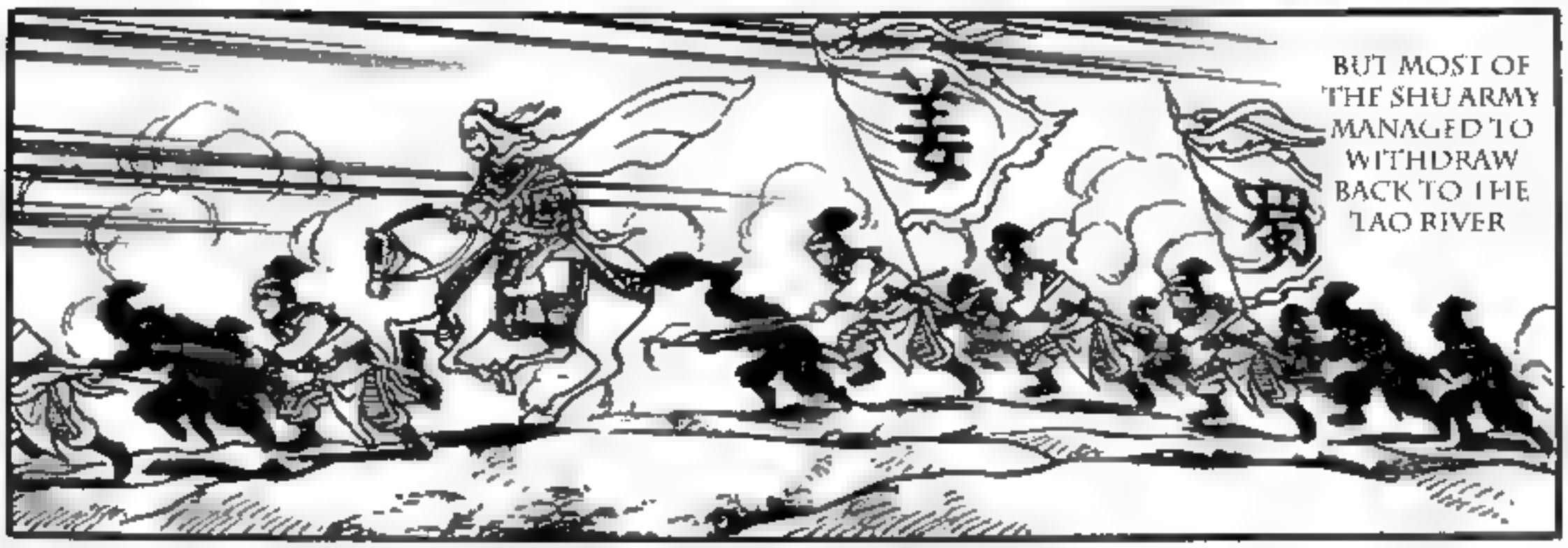
YES, SIR.

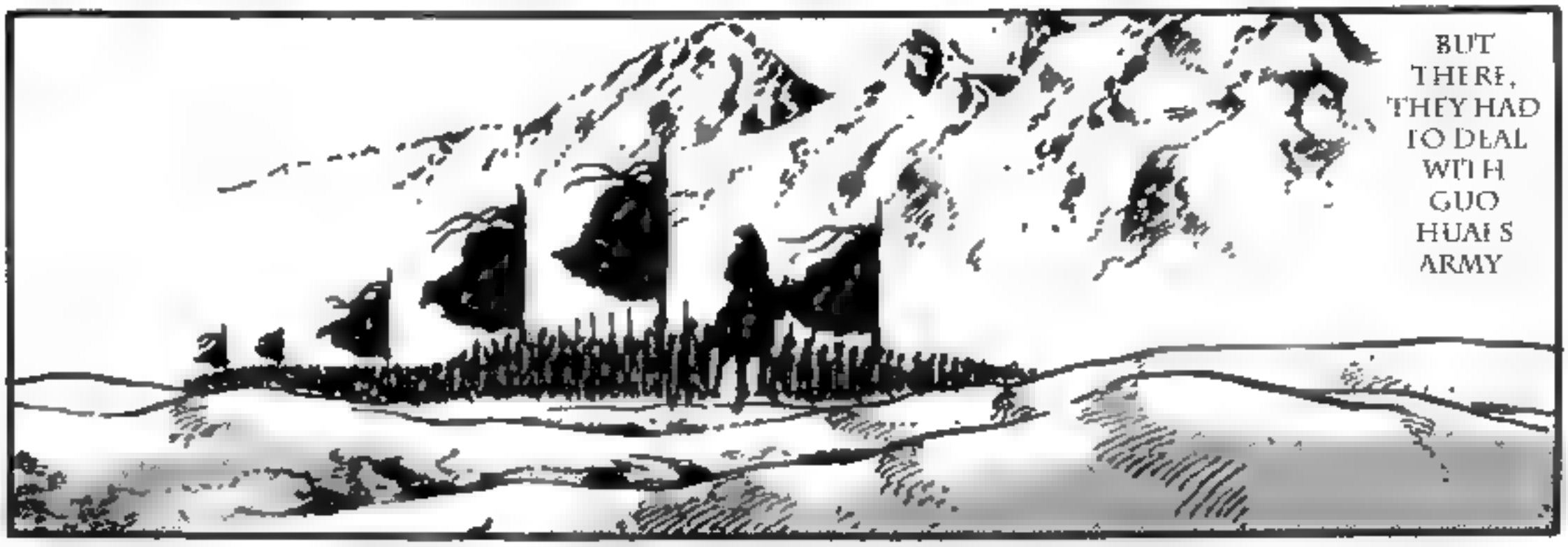
WE WILL WITHDRAW BACK TO THE TAO RIVER TOMORROW MORNING TO SECURE SUPPLIES.


THE NEXT DAY, THE SHU ARMY ABANDONED OX HEAD HILLS AND WITHDREW

CHEN TAI WAS NOT ONE TO LET HIM WITHDRAW UNSCATHED HE ORDERED HIS TROOPS TO GO DOWN THE HILLS AND GIVE PURSUIT

ANOTHER BATTLE BROKE OUT.


BUT MOST OF THE SHU ARMY MANAGED TO WITHDRAW BACK TO THE TAO RIVER

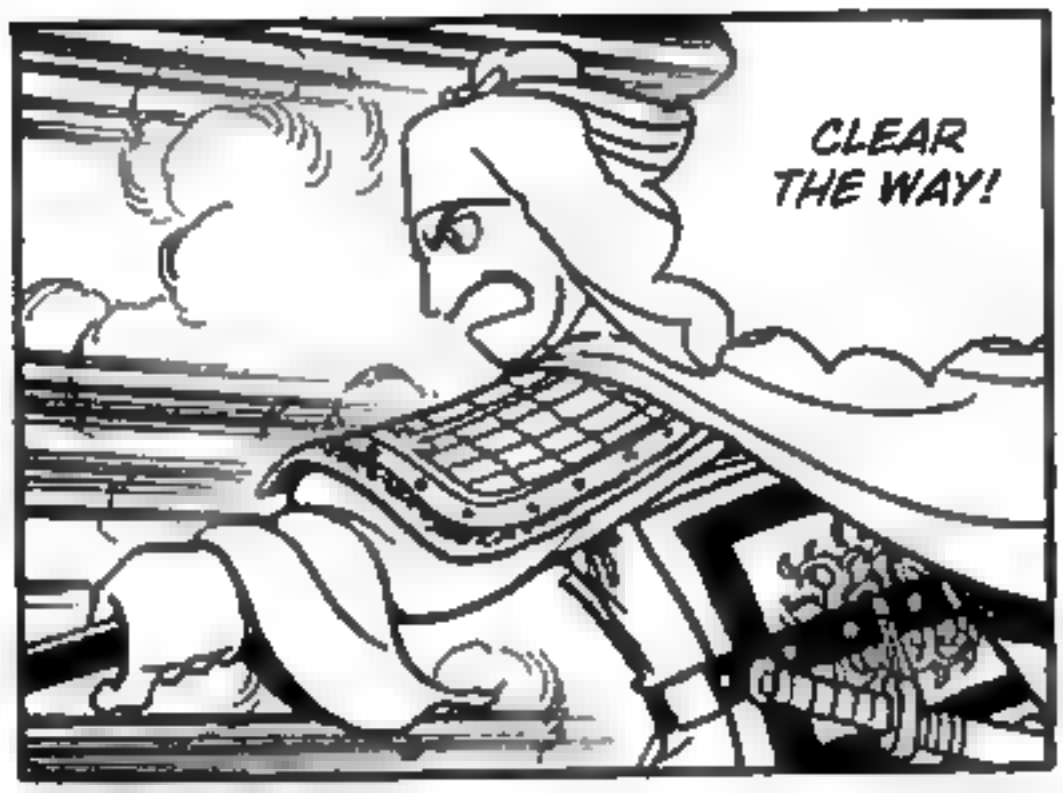

BUT THERE, THEY HAD TO DEAL WITH GUO HUAI'S ARMY

郭淮

THE SHU ARMY
WAS NOW
PRESSED FROM
THE FRONT
AND THE REAR

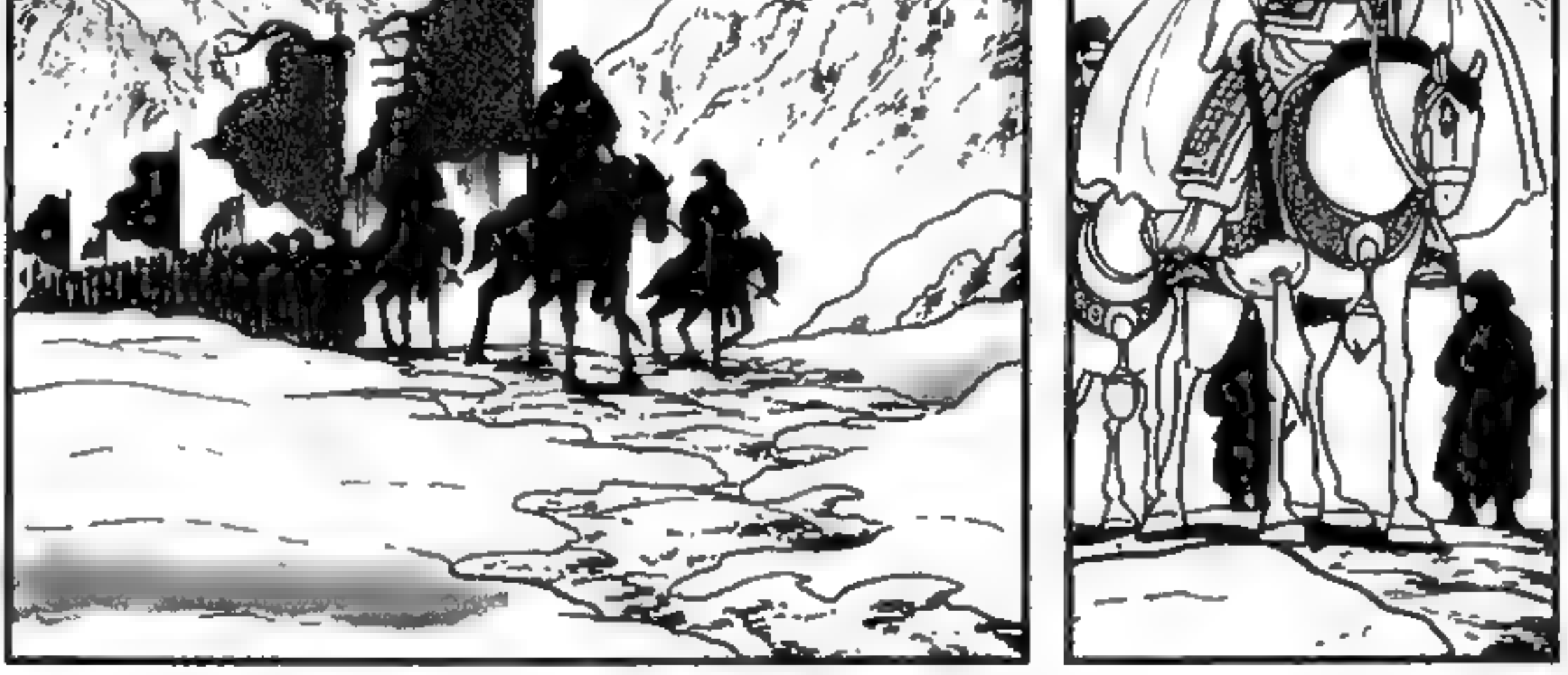
MANY
OF ITS
TROOPS
FELL.

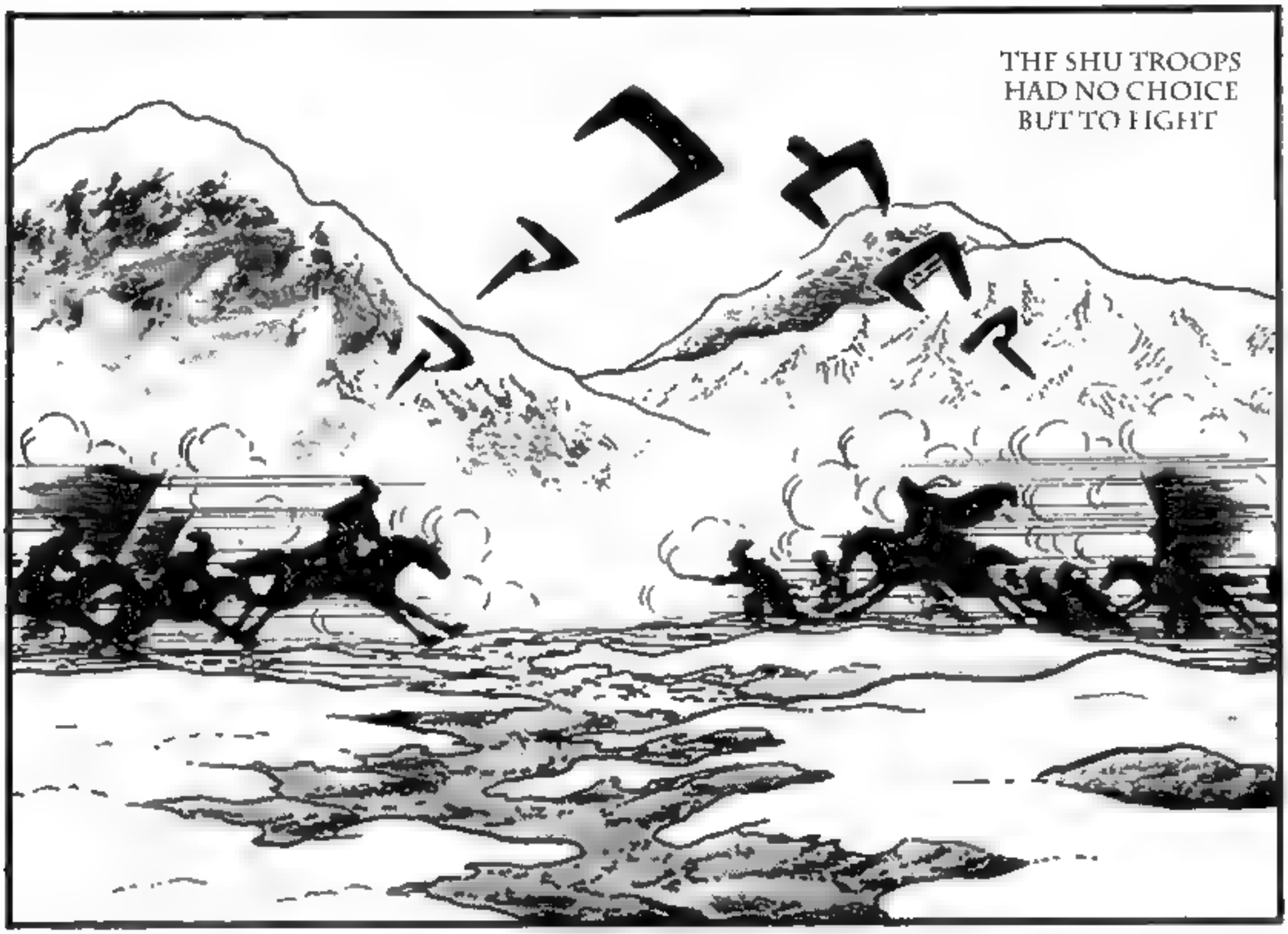
MN...
WE CANNOT SEIZE CONTROL OF THE TAO RIVER, SIR! OUR CASUALTIES ARE CLIMBING HIGHER AND HIGHER!
RETREAT!
FINE, WE WILL WITHDRAW ALL THE WAY BACK TO YANGPING PASS!


CLEAR
THE WAY!

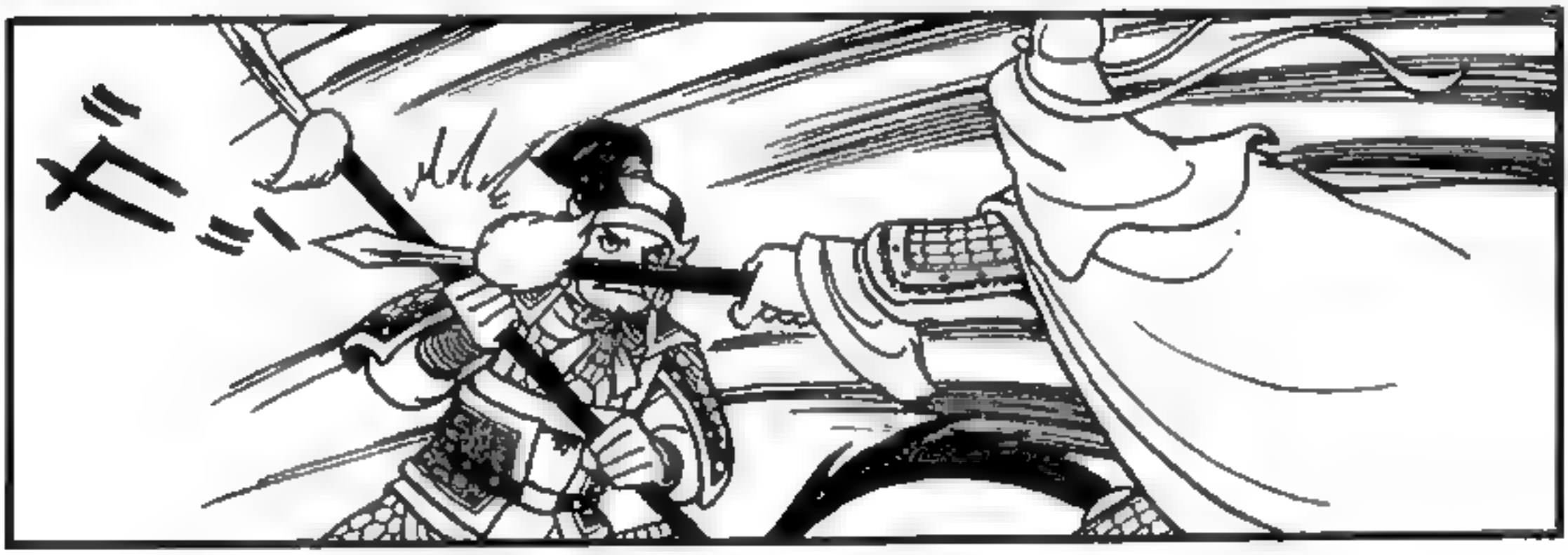
DID YOU NOT
HEAR ME!?

HM?


THE FRESH WEI ARMY THAT JIANG WEI NOW FACED WAS THE SUPPORT SENT BY SIMA YI UPON HEARING GUO HUAI'S REPORT IT WAS LED BY SIMA YI'S SON, SIMA SHI

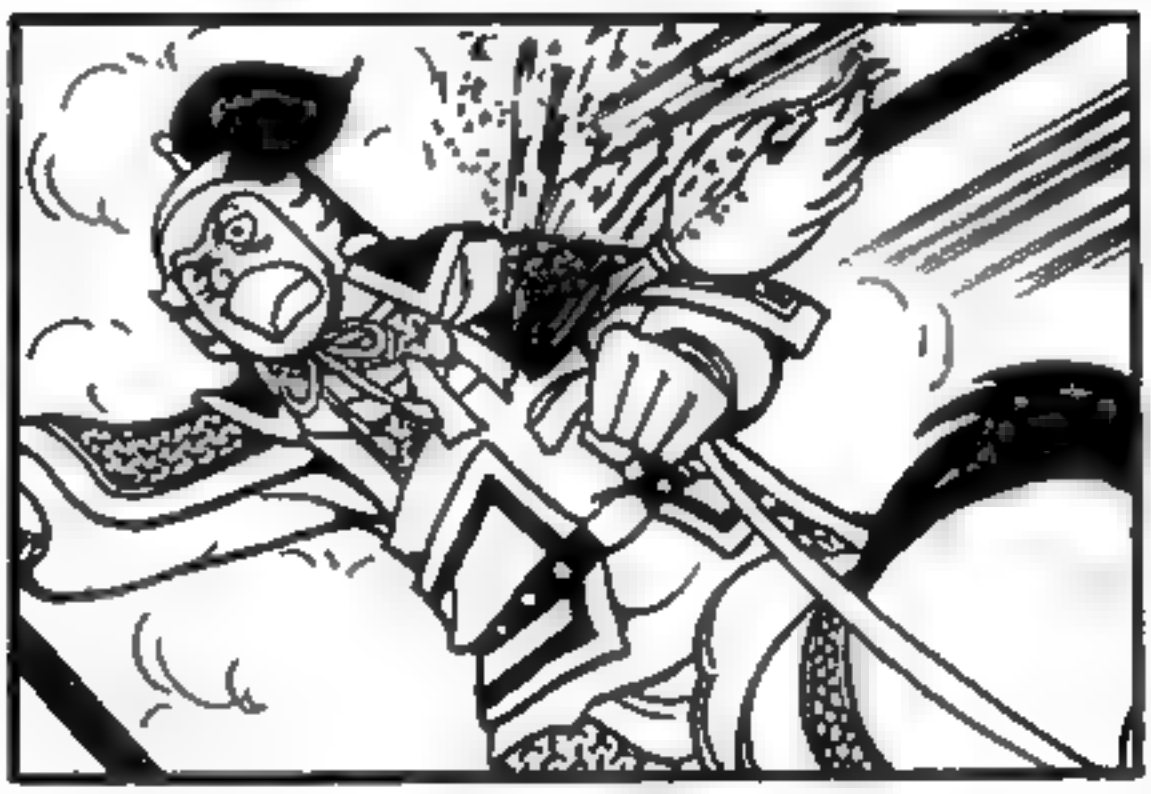

THE SHU TROOPS HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO FIGHT

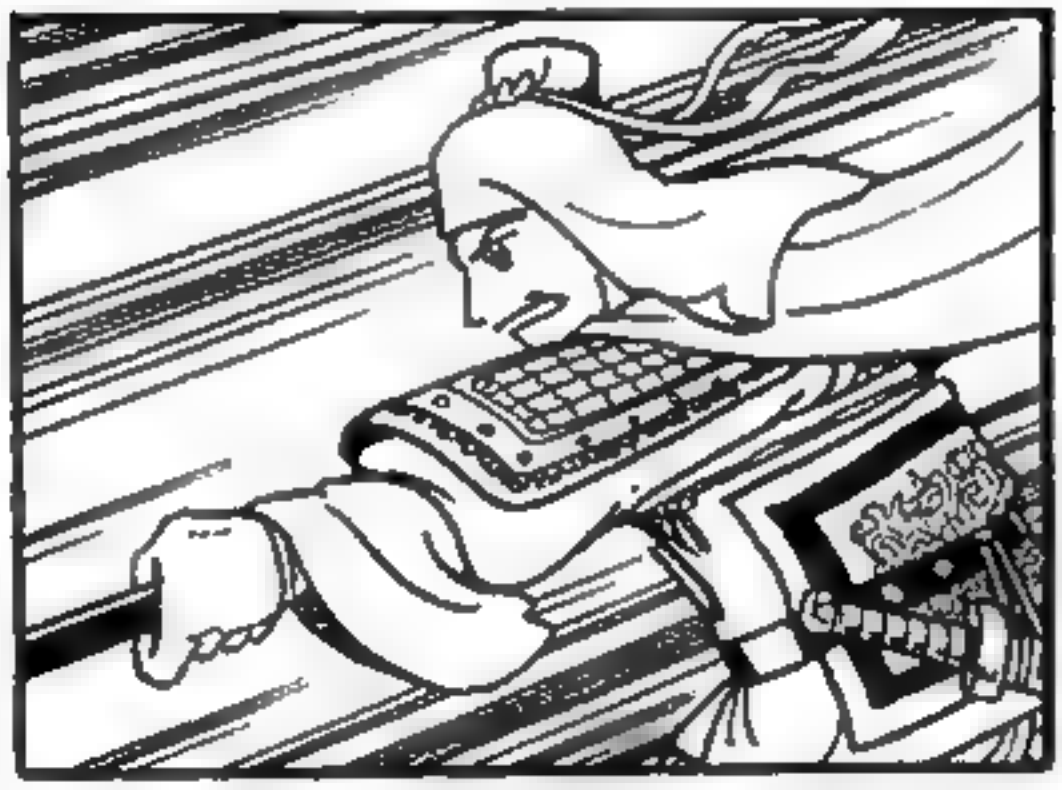
JIANG WEI LUNGED AT SIMA SHI, HOPING FOR A QUICK CONCLUSION



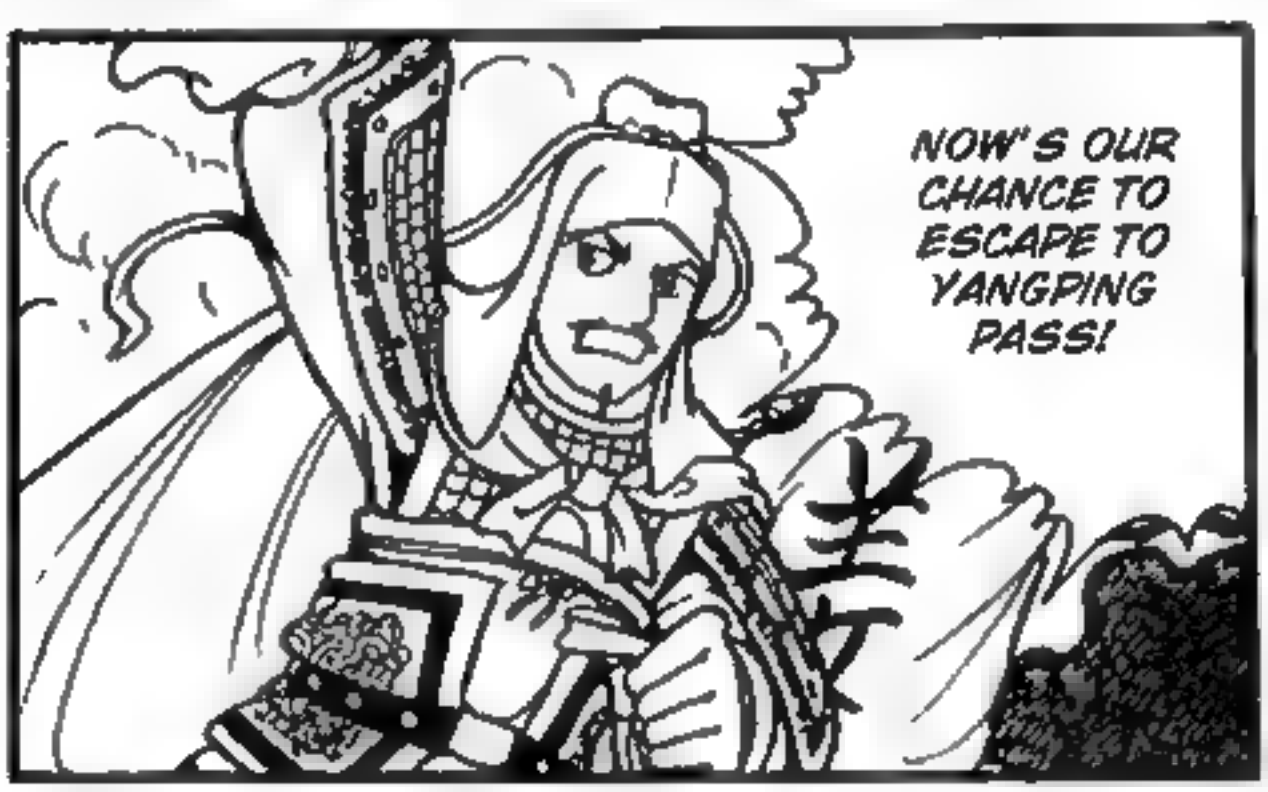
AGHH!

OUR GENERAL IS IN DANGER!





TCH!


NOW'S OUR CHANCE TO ESCAPE TO YANGPING PASS!

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司馬
WHAT DO WE NOW, SIR?

THAT JIANG WEI CERTAINLY LIVES UP TO HIS MARTIAL REPUTATION...

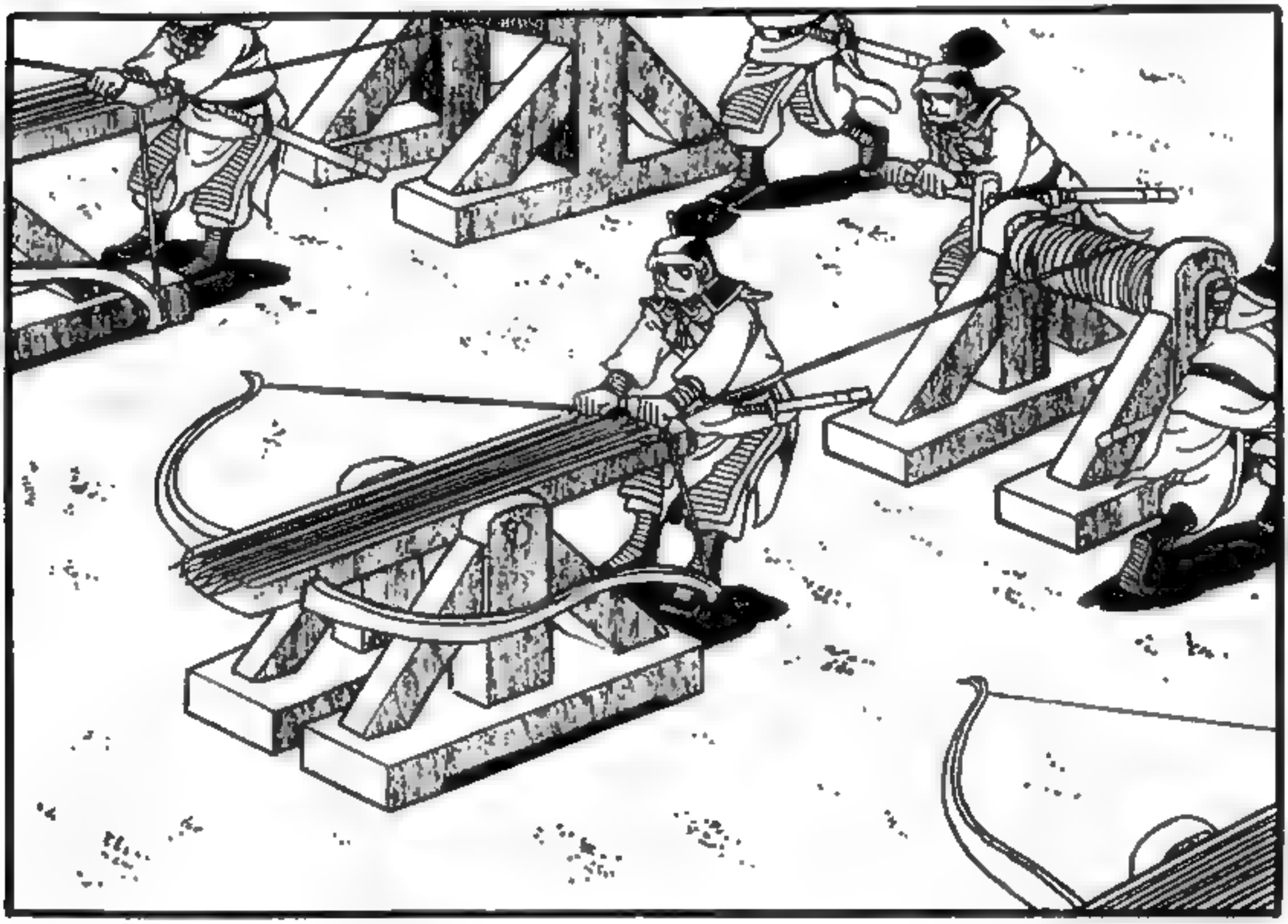
IS THAT NOT OBVIOUS!? PURSUE THE TIRED ENEMIES!

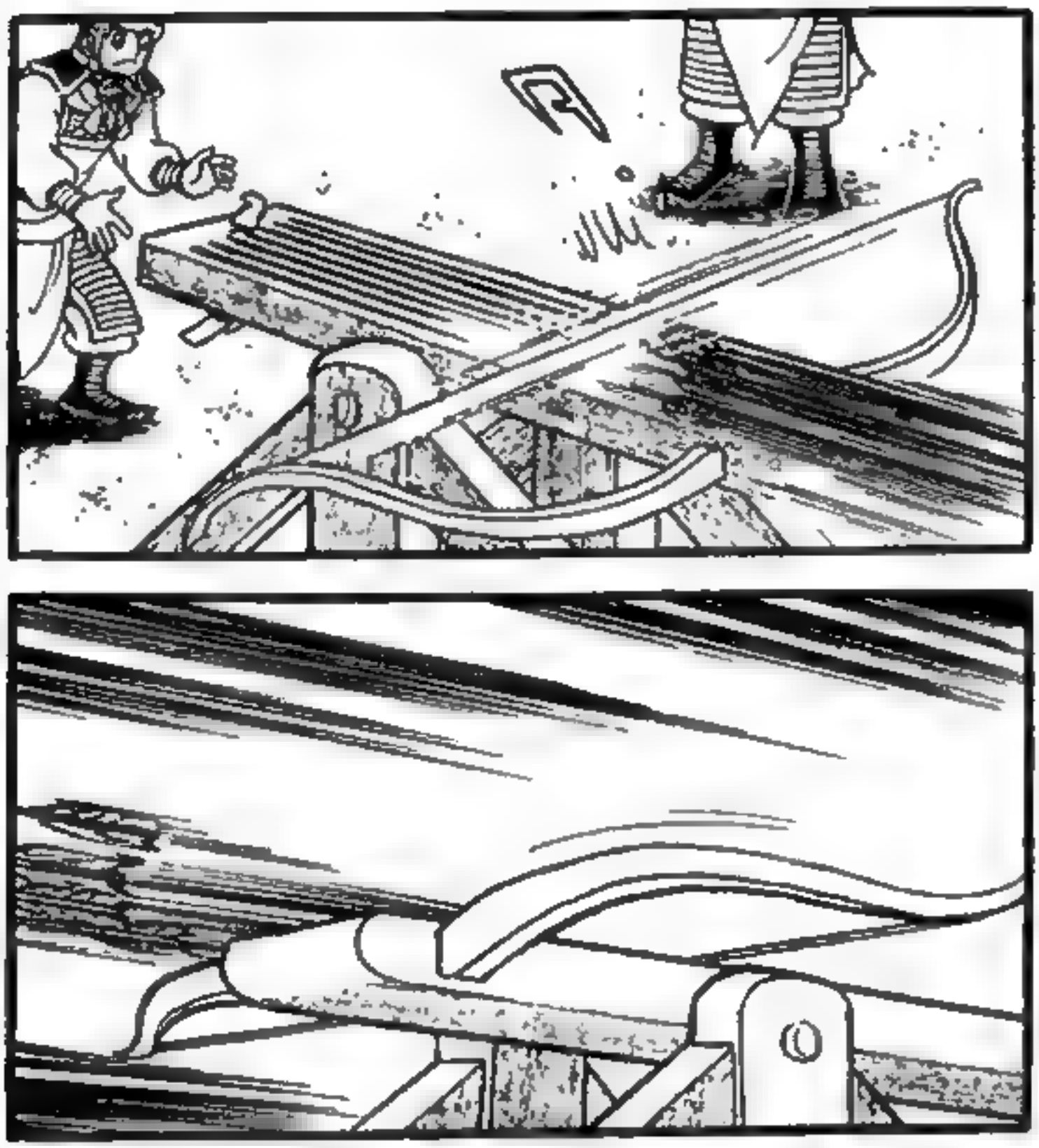
WE'RE HERE AT LAST! EVERY-BODY RUSH INSIDE FOR SAFETY!

CHARGE IN BEFORE THEY CAN CLOSE THE GATES!

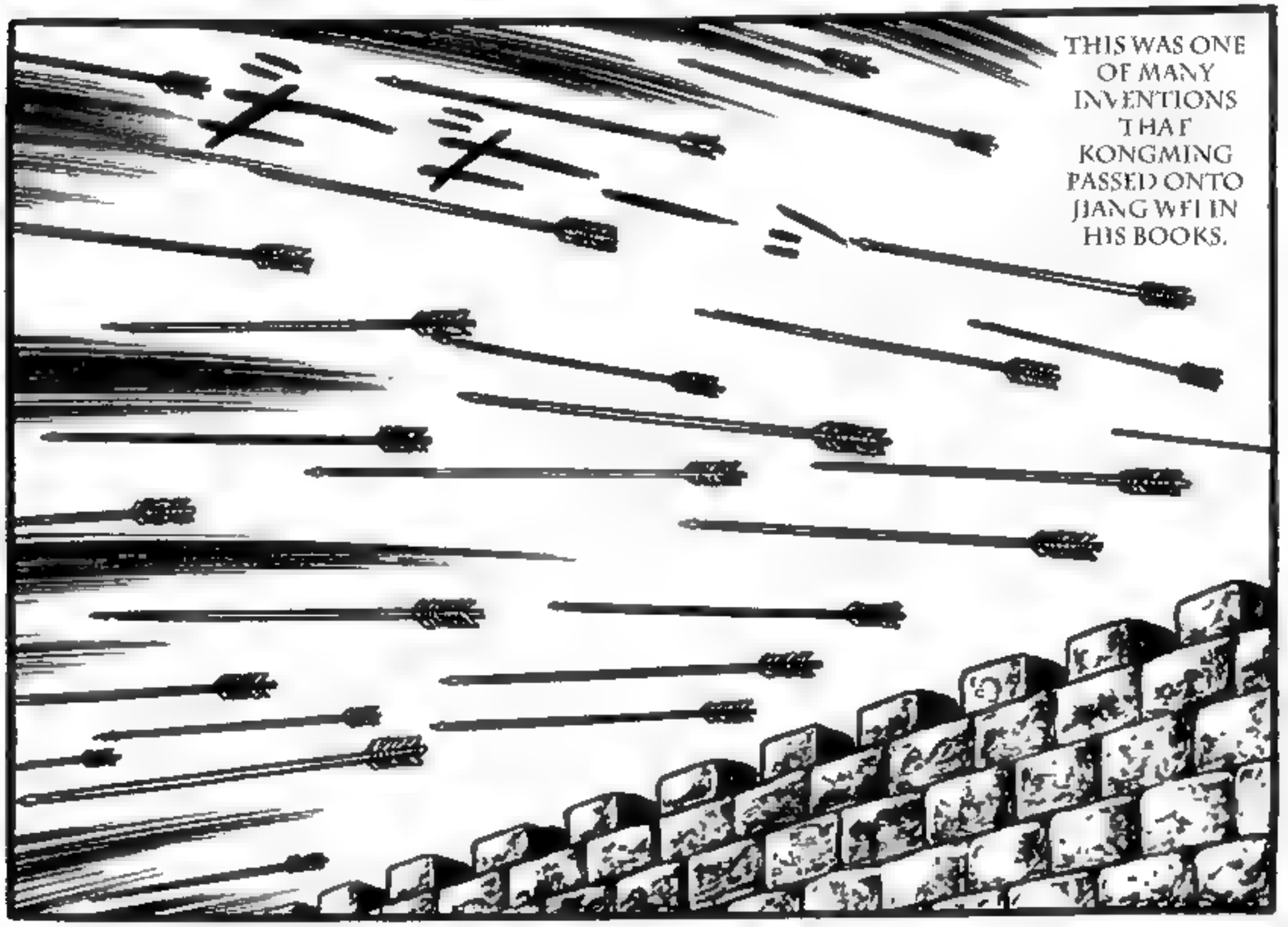
YES, SIR!
READY THE CROSS-BOWS!

USE THE MULTI-SHOT CROSS-BOWS!



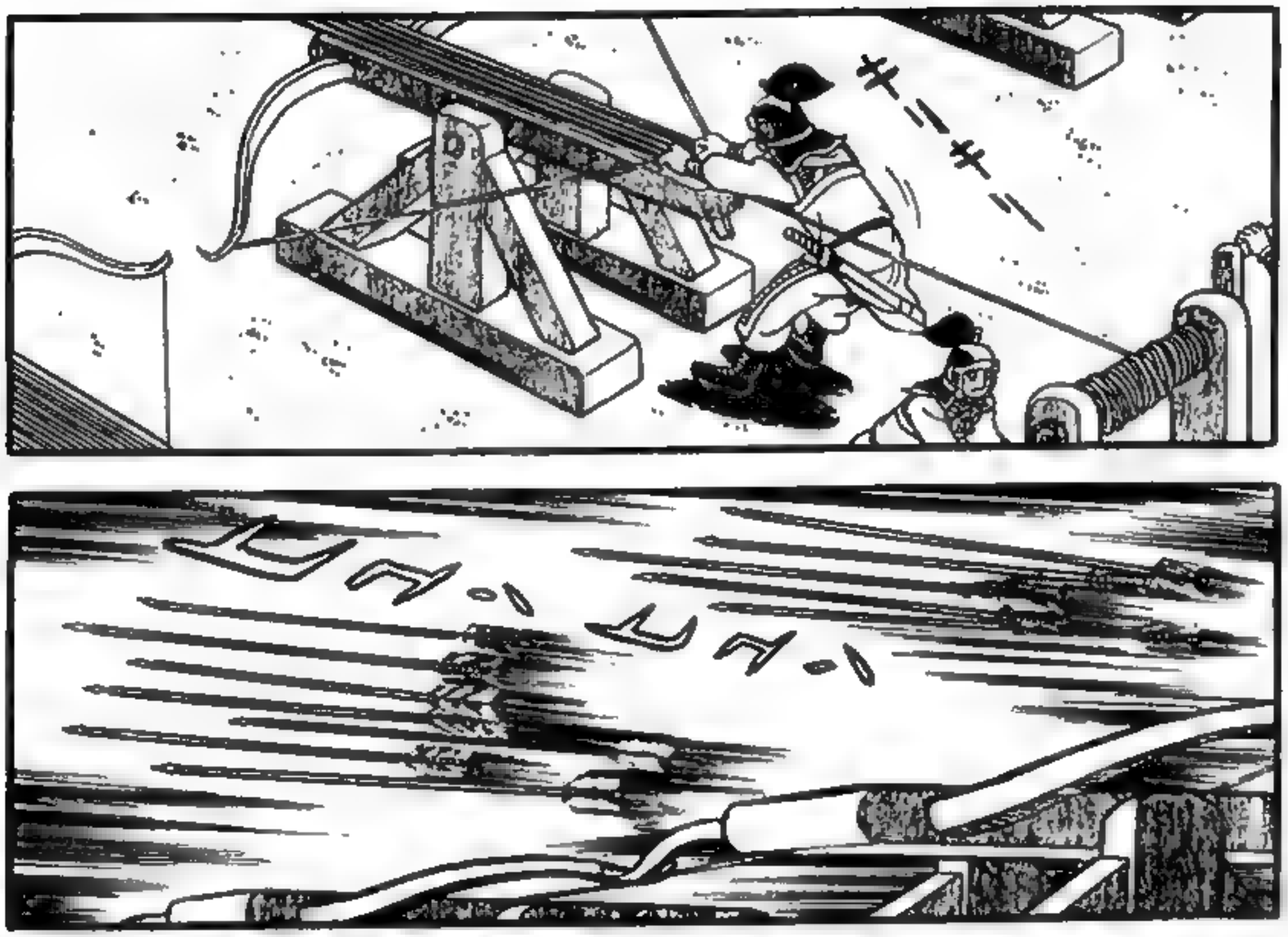


FIRE!


THIS WAS ONE OF MANY INVENTIONS THAT KONGMING PASSED ONTO JIANG WEI IN HIS BOOKS.

A SINGLE SHOT DELIVERED 10 POISONED BOLTS
AGHH!
UGHH!

IT'S RAINING DOWN NON-STOP!
T-THESE ARE NO ORDINARY ARROWS!


ドン ドン
IN AN INSTANT, SIMA SHI NEARLY LOST HALF OF HIS TROOPS

RETREAT!
RETREAT!
SHIMA SHI AND
HIS SURVIVING
TROOPS
WITHDREW
IN PANIC

MEANWHILE, THE TWO FORTS AT MT. QU SURRENDERED AT LAST TO GUO HUAI'S SIEGE AS NO SHU REINFORCEMENTS CAME

郭淮

SIR, OUR LOSSES WERE NOT LIGHT EITHER. I'M AFRAID WE SHOULD ACCEPT OUR LOSSES AND CALL OFF THIS CAMPAIGN. WE CAN COME UP WITH A NEW STRATEGY LATER.

YES, THE GARRISON RAN OUT OF ALL WATER AND THEY HAD NO CHOICE.

OUR FORTS HAVE BEEN CAPTURED!?

THUS, JIANG WEI BITTERLY WITHDREW TO HANZHONG.

IT IS REGRETTABLE BUT I SUPPOSE WE MUST...

UPON LEARNING OF THE SHU WITHDRAWAL, SIMA SHI TOO WITHDREW BACK TO LUOYANG

SOON AFTER, SIMA YI FELL SERIOUSLY ILL FOR REAL THIS TIME.

IT SEEMS MY LIFE, TOO, IS REACHING AN END.

YES, FATHER?

SHI ZHAO...

AN END? SURELY YOU DON'T MEAN...

BUT BEFORE I PASS, I WISH TO LEAVE YOU TWO WITH SOME WORDS OF WISDOM.

NO, I DO MEAN IT. I AM NOT FAKING ANY ILLNESS THIS TIME.

WHILE SOME MAY CRITICIZE ME FOR BEING EXCESSIVELY CAUTIOUS, I DOUBT I WOULD HAVE SURVIVED KONGMING'S CAMPAIGNS IF NOT FOR THAT.

.....

I MAY NOW BE THE HIGHEST RANKING MINISTER IN WEI, BUT MY JOURNEY TO THE TOP WAS A LONG AND DIFFICULT ONE, MANY SUSPECTED OR TRIED TO FRAME ME FOR TREASON OR REBELLION. IT WAS ONLY MY CAUTIOUS NATURE THAT ALLOWED ME TO OVERCOME THESE TROUBLES.

WE WILL ETCH YOUR WORDS OF WISDOM FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS AND MIND.

ALTHOUGH YOU TWO ARE NOW IN POSITIONS OF GREAT POWER, DO NOT FORGET THERE WILL ALWAYS BE THOSE ENVIOUS OF THAT POWER AND SEEK TO CHALLENGE YOU. CONSTANT VIGILANCE IS CRUCIAL, MY SONS.

PLEASE DO NOT RESIGN YOURSELF TO DEATH, FATHER! YOUR PRESENCE IS STILL NEEDED IN WEI.

GOOD, THEN I CAN PASS ON TO THE AFTERLIFE IN PEACE.

ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING... TRULY, FACING HIM WAS THE HIGHLIGHT OF MY LIFE. I HOPE HE WILL BE SO KIND AS TO TEACH ME A FEW THINGS IN THE AFTERLIFE.

I HAVE NO WORRIES AS LONG AS YOU TWO ARE HERE.

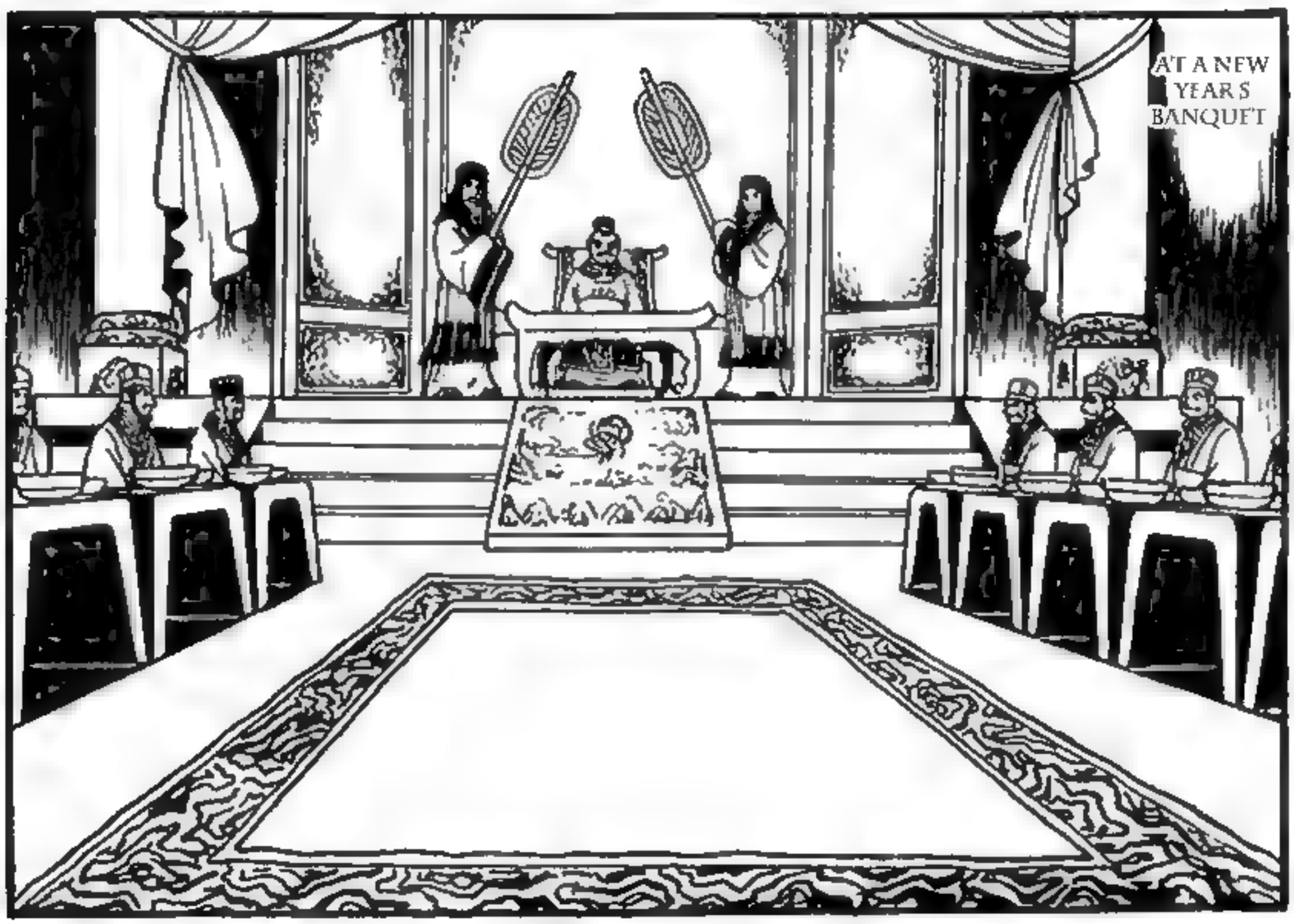
SHORTLY THEREAFTER, SIMA YI DREW HIS LAST BREATH

EMPEROR CAO FANG ORDERED A GRAND FUNERAL

HE THEN APPOINTED SIMA SHI AS COMMANDER IN CHIEF AND SIMA ZHAO AS GENERAL OF THE FLYING CAVALRY JUST AS SIMA YI HAD HELD SUPREME POWER, HIS TWO SONS NOW WIELDED THE TRUE POWER IN WEI

IN TIME, THE WEI EMPEROR WOULD TRY TO TAKE BACK HIS RIGHTFUL POWER, TRIGGERING A CHAIN OF EVENTS THAT WOULD LEAD TO HIS DEPOSITION AND THE REPLACEMENT OF WEI BY THE JIN DYNASTY FOUNDED BY SIMA YAN, THE SON OF SIMA ZHAO

JIANG WEI ALONE



GUO XUN, A FORMER WEI GENERAL WHO HAD DEFECTED TO SHU ASSASSINATED FEI YI

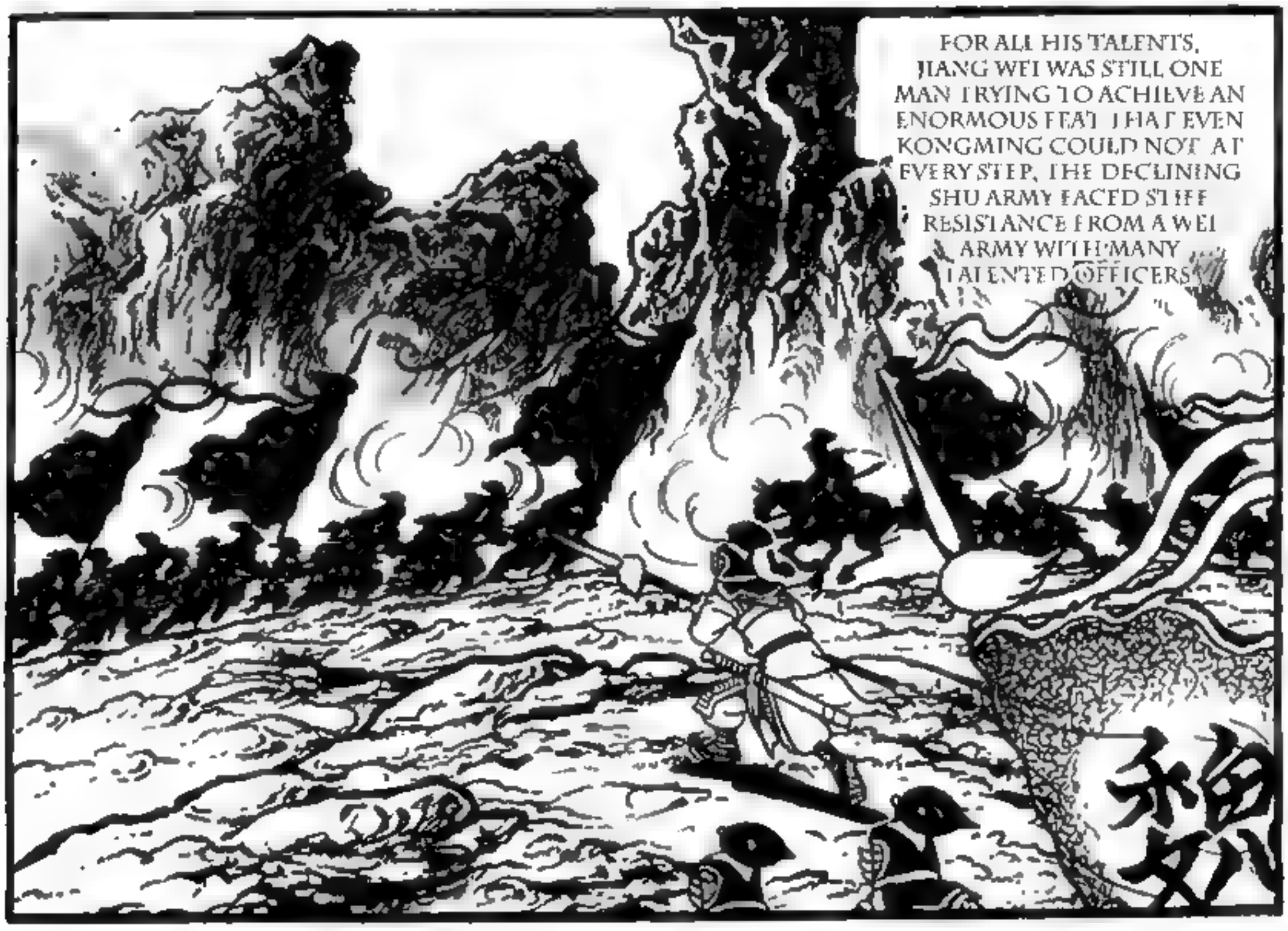
JUST AS LIU BEI PASSED ON HIS DREAM OF RESTORING THE HAN TO KONGMING UPON HIS DEATH, SO TOO DID KONGMING PASS IT ONWARDS TO JIANG WAN, FEI YI, AND JIANG WEI. JIANG WAN HAD ALREADY PASSED AWAY FROM ILLNESS MANY YEARS AGO, AND NOW WITH THE MURDER OF FEI YI, JIANG WEI FOUND HIMSELF ALONE TO SHOULDER SHU'S GREAT BURDEN.

JIANG WEI IMMEDIATELY RENEWED THE NORTHERN CAMPAIGNS ONCE MORE
姜維
BUT FOR EVERY STEP FORWARD, HE WAS BESET BY ANOTHER STEP BACK

IN 253 AD, HE ATTACKED DIDAO IN CONJUNCTION WITH A WU ATTACK ON HEFEI. BOTH SHU AND WU WERE UNSUCCESSFUL

IN 254 AD HE AGAIN ATTACKED DIDAO WITH INITIAL SUCCESS, BEFORE RETREATING IN THE FACE OF A WEI COUNTERATTACK

IN 255 AD, HE LED TROOPS TO QISHAN, AND IN 256 AD, HE WAS DEFEATED AT DUAN VALLEY


FOR ALL HIS TALENTS, JIANG WEI WAS STILL ONE MAN TRYING TO ACHIEVE AN ENORMOUS FEAT THAT EVEN KONGMING COULD NOT. AT EVERY STEP, THE DECLINING SHU ARMY FACED STIFF RESISTANCE FROM A WEI ARMY WITH MANY TALENTED OFFICERS

IN 263 AD, LIU SHAN CHANGED THE REIGN ERA FROM THE 6TH YEAR OF WONDERFUL NIGHT TO THE 1ST YEAR OF JOYFUL PROSPERITY

AS THE REIGN ERA TITLES IMPLIED, LIU SHAN DISTANCED HIMSELF FROM THE CONCERNS OF JIANG WEI'S CAMPAIGNS AND SPENT HIS DAYS DRINKING AND PLAYING WITH WOMEN IN HIS LUXURIOUS PALACE

YES, SIR.

LIU SHAN SPENDS HIS DAYS DRINKING AND PLAYING?

WT!

HE IS SURROUNDED BY SYCOPHANTS AND DOES NOT GIVE HIS TIME NOR EAR TO ABLE AND HONEST MINISTERS.

THE TIME HAS COME AT LAST THEN!

SPLENDID...

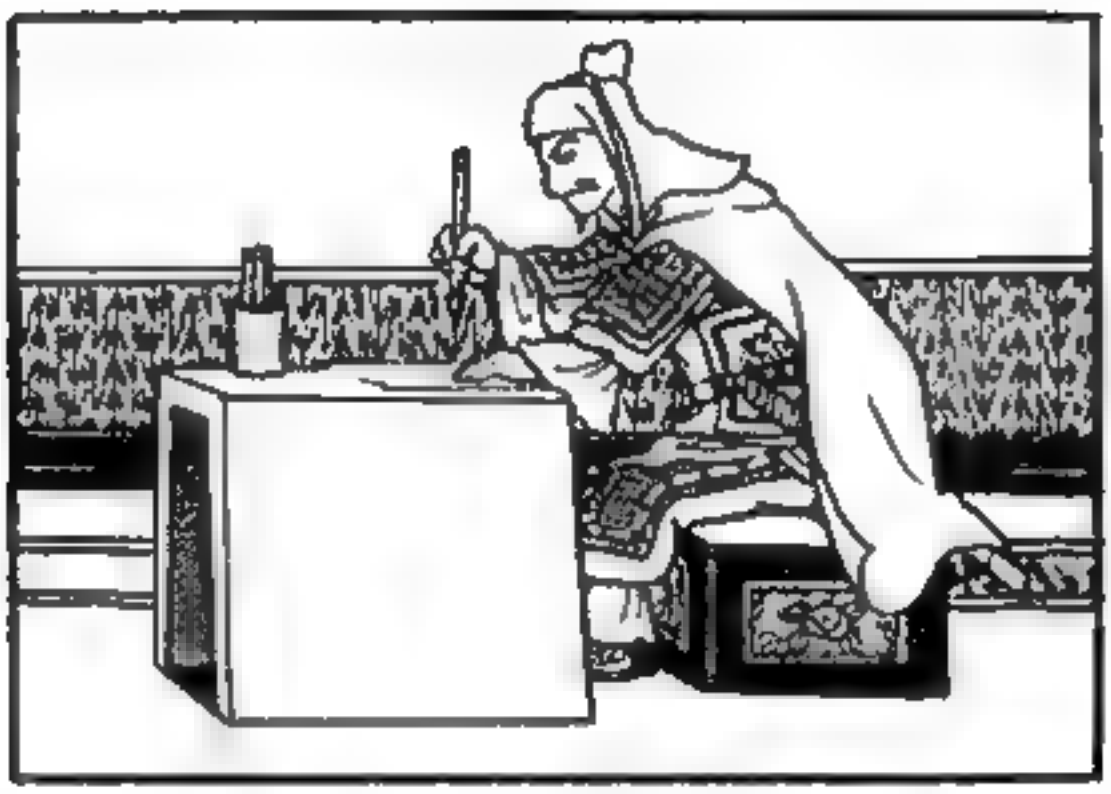
DENG AI! ZHONG HUI!
THE SHU EMPEROR IS IDLE AND CARES LITTLE FOR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS. THE TIME TO INVADE SHU HAS COME AT HAND.
YES?
YES, SIR?
YES, SIR!
I WOULD LIKE YOU TWO TO LEAD THE INVASION.

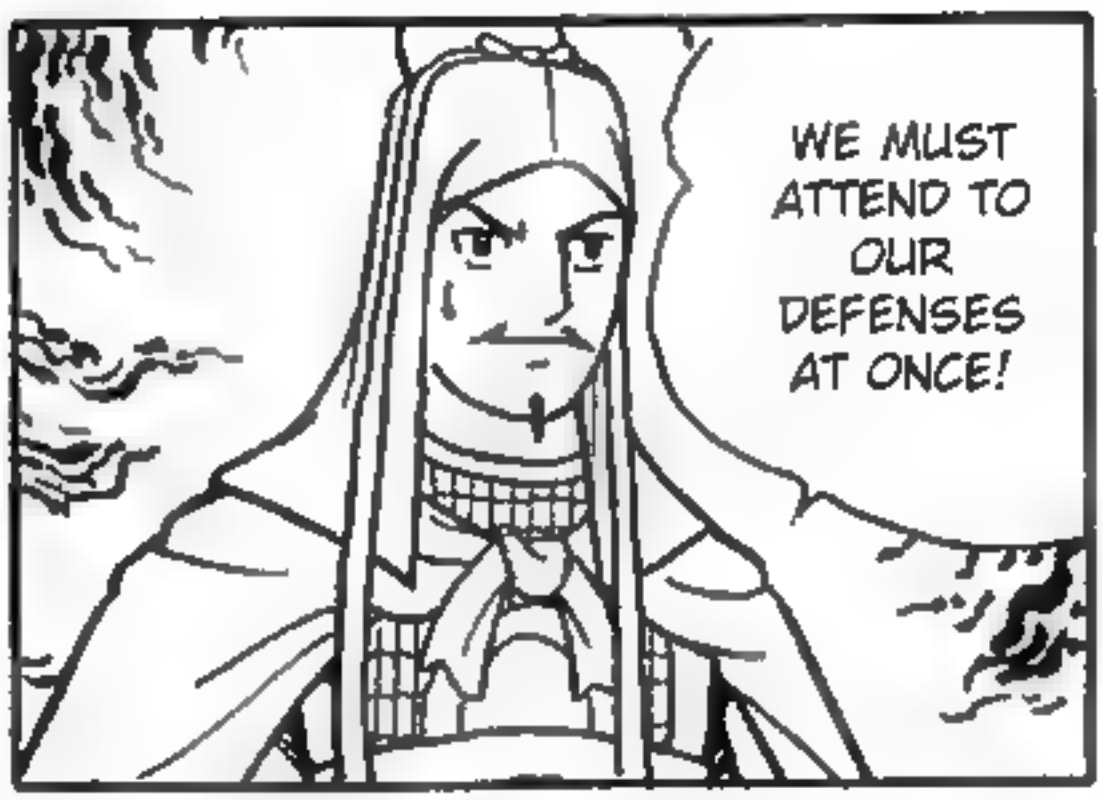
SIMA ZHAO LEAPT AT
THIS LONG AWAITED
CHANCE BY SENDING
A MASSIVE ARMY TO
TAKE HANZHONG

JIANG WEI WAS AT TAZHONG WHEN HE RECEIVED WORD OF THE INVASION

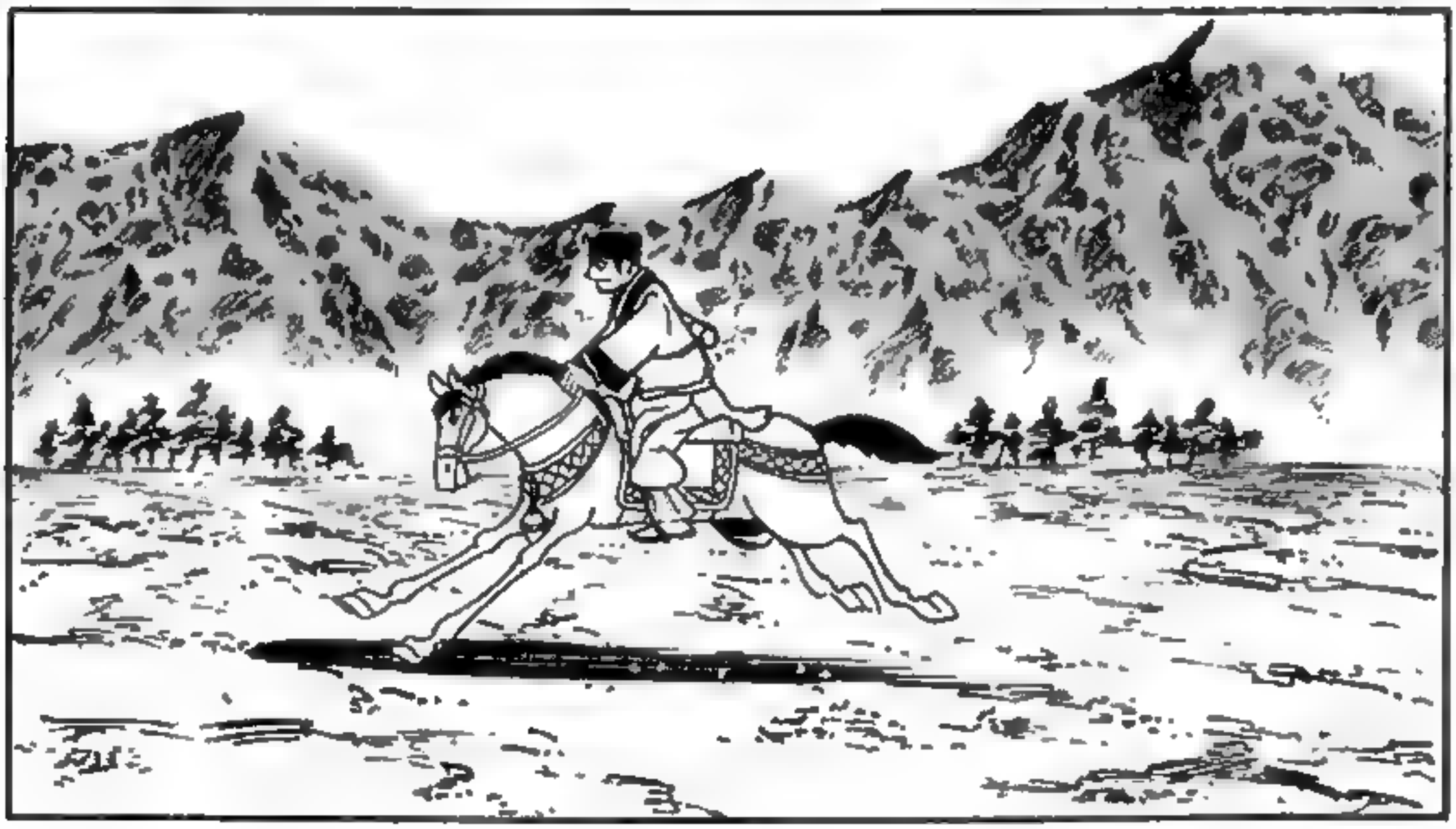
YES, AND THE LEADERS ARE DENG AI AND ZHONG HUI.

A MASSIVE WEI ARMY AIMS TO SEIZE HANZHONG!?

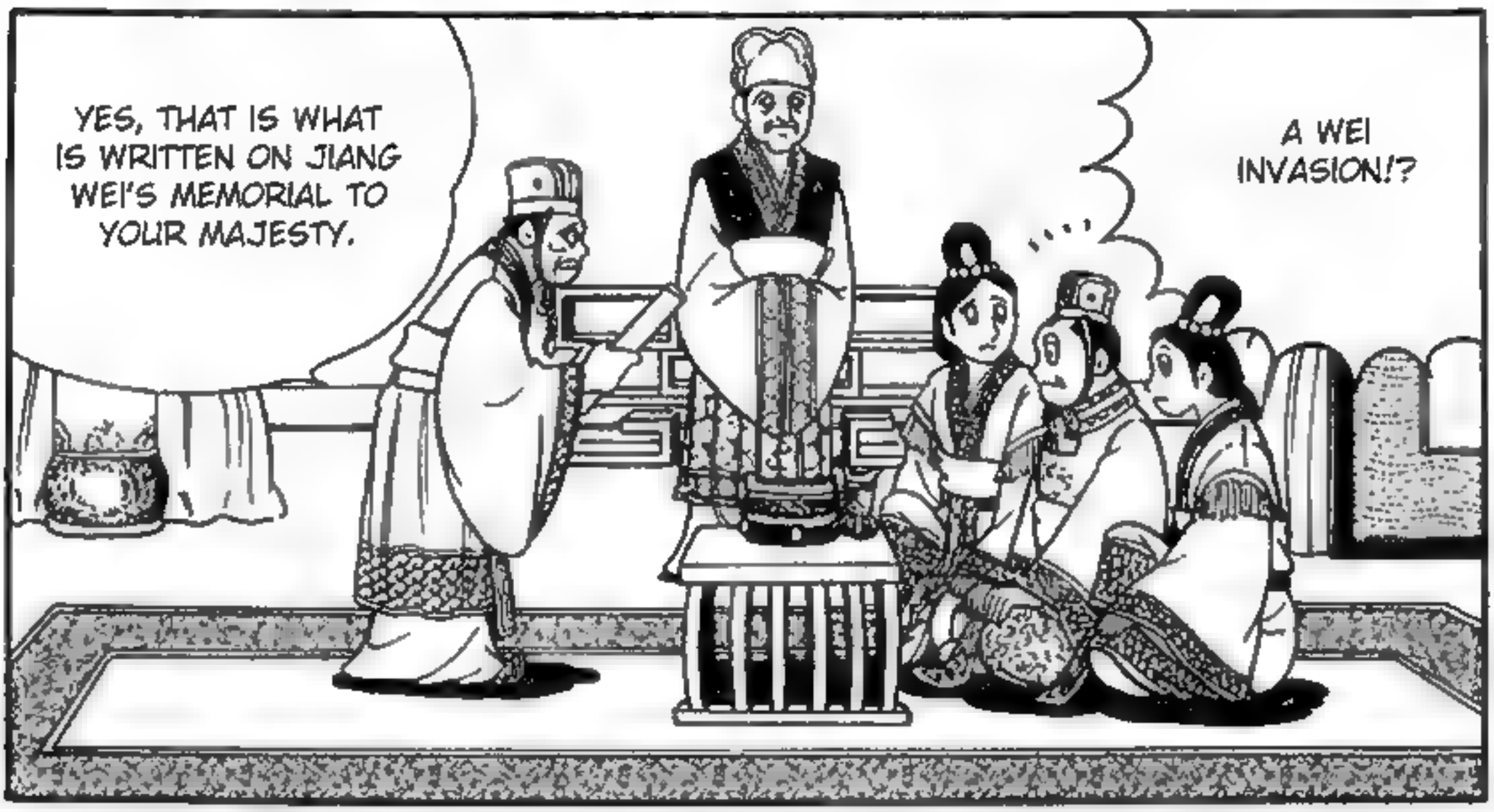



WE MUST ATTEND TO OUR DEFENSES AT ONCE!

YES, SIR.
DELIVER THIS TO HIS MAJESTY QUICKLY! THE FATE OF SHU RESTS UPON IT.



CHENGDU


YES, THAT IS WHAT IS WRITTEN ON JIANG WEI'S MEMORIAL TO YOUR MAJESTY.
A WEI INVASION!?

AHH!

L-LET ME SEE.

JIANG WEI SAYS A WEI ARMY IS ON ITS WAY TO HANZHONG AND I MUST TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION.

WHAT DOES IT SAY, YOUR MAJESTY?

HAHAHA. OH, JIANG WEI AND HIS LIES...

HE URGES THAT I SEND ZHANG YI TO DEFEND YANGPING PASS, LIAO HUA TO YINPING PASS, AND AN ENVOY TO WU TO REQUEST IMMEDIATE AID.

AS SUCH, HE IS FABRICATING A WEI INVASION HE CAN SUCCESSFULLY "DEFEND" TO ACHIEVE MERIT AND REWARD.

JIANG WEI HAS BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL SO FAR IN HIS NORTHERN CAMPAIGNS, AND LAST YEAR, HIS FAILED ATTACK ON TAOYANG LED TO THE DEATH OF XIAHOU BA.

LIES!?

YES, YOUR MAJESTY.

SKILLED, YOU SAY, HUANG HAO? VERY WELL, BRING HER HERE AT ONCE.

AH, I HAVE A GOOD IDEA! I KNOW OF A SPIRIT MEDIUM WHO IS QUITE GOOD AT GIVING PROPHECIES. YOUR MAJESTY SHOULD CONSULT HER ON HOW DANGEROUS THIS SUPPOSED INVASION IS.

WAR IS SUCH A LOATHSOME THING. I DESIRE NOTHING MORE THAN TO SPEND MY DAYS WITH YOU GIRLS AND FINE WINE.

GOOD.

I HAVE BROUGHT HER TO A SPARE ROOM IN THE PALACE. SHE IS READY TO BEGIN, YOUR MAJESTY.

I'LL BE BACK SHORTLY, GIRLS.

SO YOU'RE THE PROPHETESS?

OH, I SEE.

SHE WILL SUMMON THE GODS TO HER BODY SO ALL MUST BOW BEFORE HER DURING THE RITUAL.

THEN PLEASE PREDICT THE FUTURE OF SHU.

MURMUR...
MURMUR...

THE DIVINE SPIRITS ARE POSSESSING HER NOW.

HIII!
HIII!

O-OH...

IN A FEW YEARS, ALL OF WEI WILL BECOME SHU, SO THERE IS NO CAUSE FOR A SINGLE CONCERN!

I AM THE GOD OF THE WEST RIVERLANDS! FOR WHAT REASON DO YOU DISTURB ME WHEN YOU ENJOY PEACE!?

GASP!

Y-YES, I SEE.

YES, THIS IS ALL QUITE NORMAL FOR HER RITUAL, YOUR MAJESTY.

HUANG HAO, IS SHE FINE?

FORGIVE ME FOR ANY INSOLENCE I SHOWED IN FRONT OF YOUR MAJESTY.

.....

...HM?

REWARD THIS SPIRIT MEDIUM, HUANG HAO.

DO NOT WORRY. YOU WERE MOST HELPFUL.

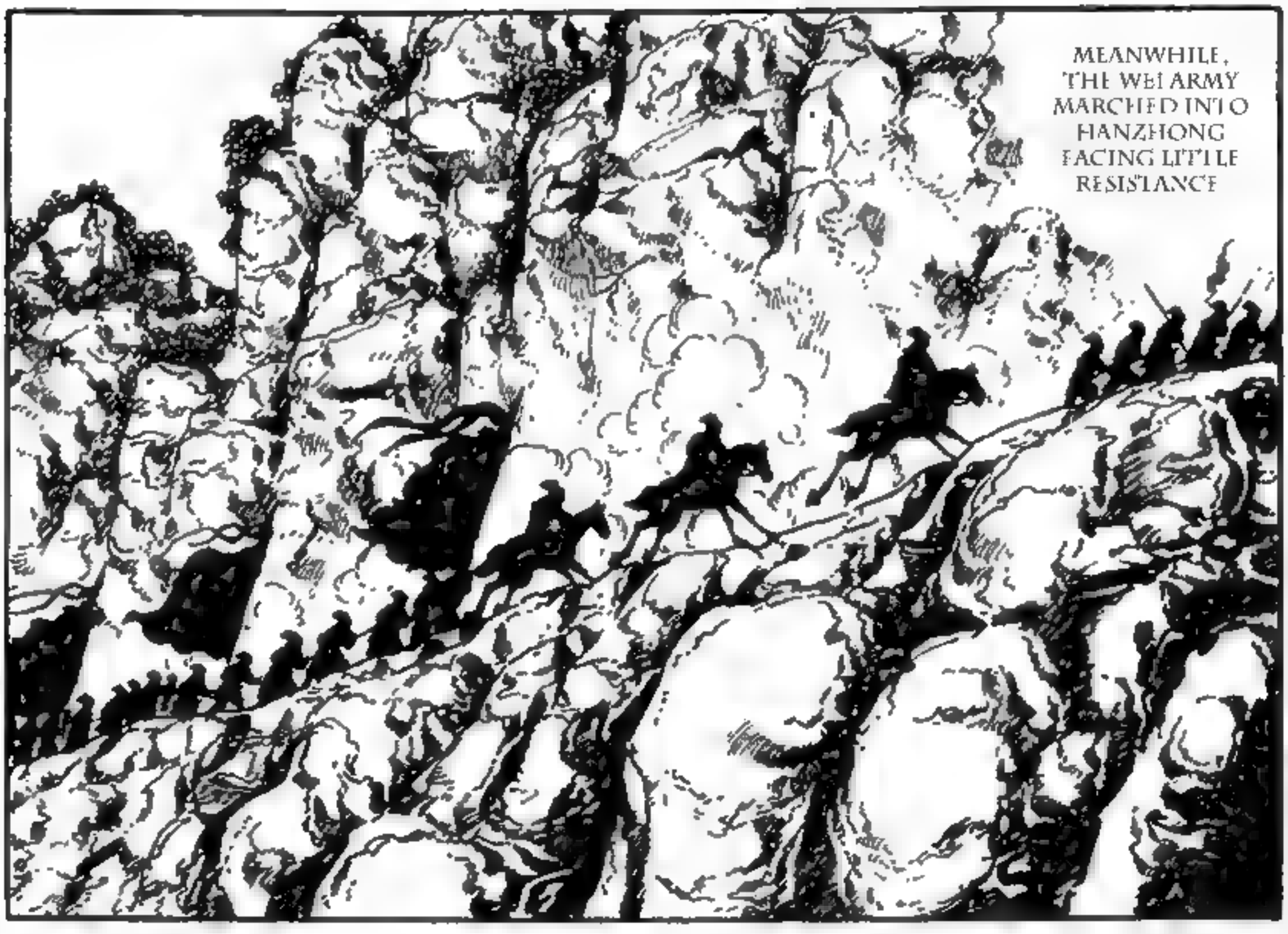
ACCEPT THIS AS A TOKEN OF OUR APPRECIATION.

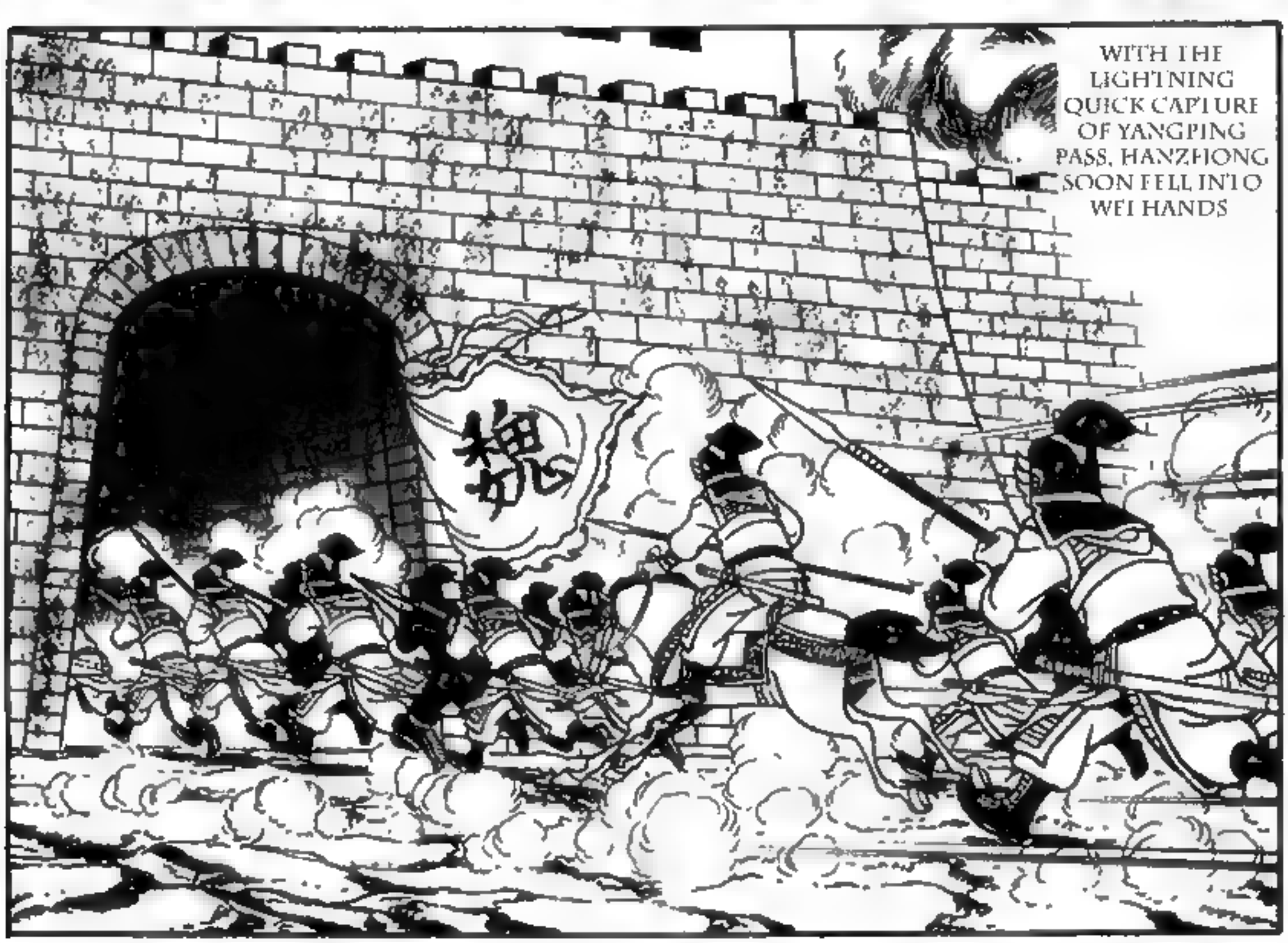
THUS, LIU SHAN SHUT OFF HIS EARS TO JIANG WEI'S PLEAS AND RETURNED TO DRINKING AND PLAYING

JIANG WEI TRIED IN VAIN TO WARN CHENGDU AGAIN AND AGAIN

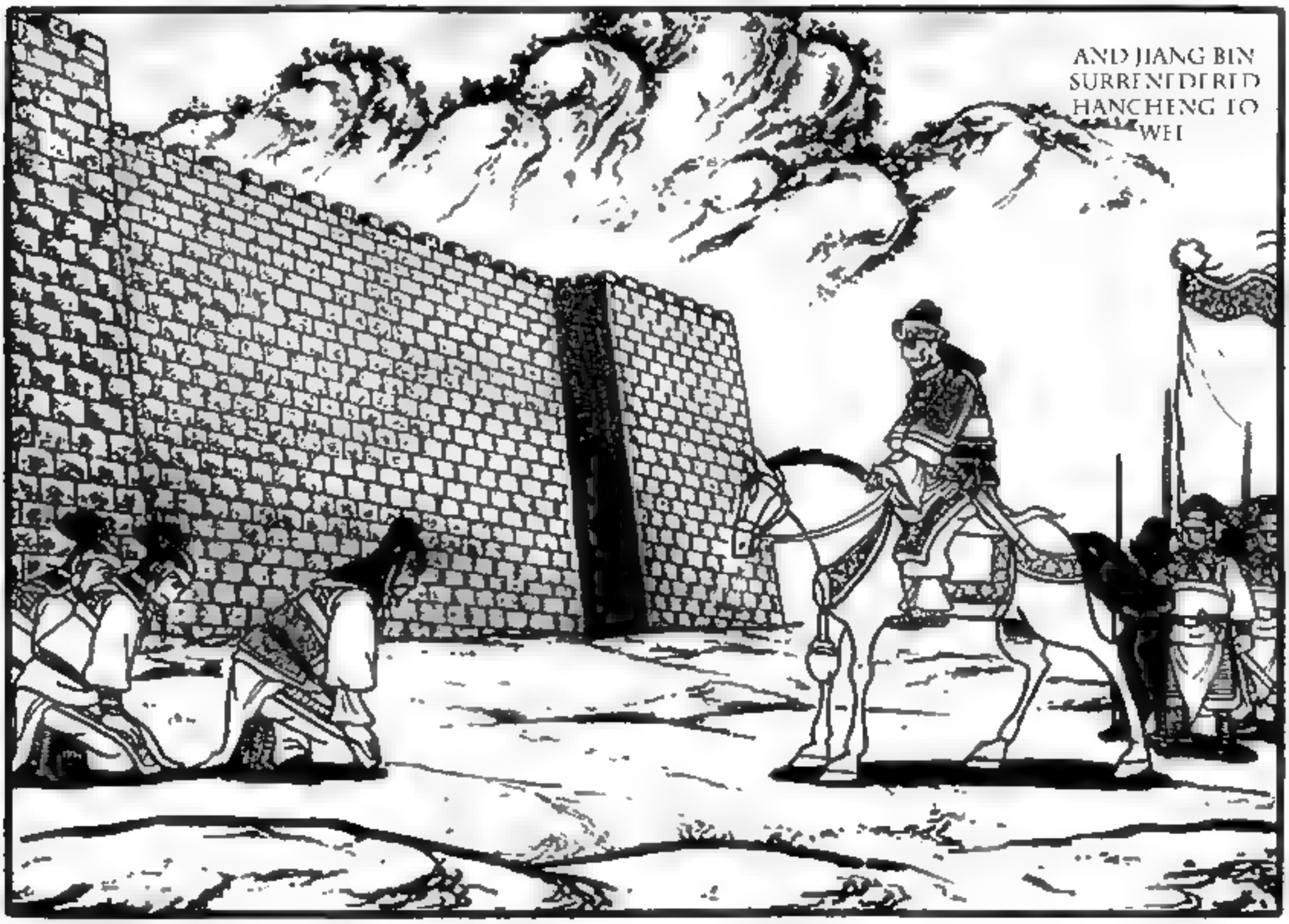
FOR THE EUNUCH HUANG HAO INTERCEPTED JIANG WEI'S LETTERS

BUT THERE WAS NO REPLY.


MEANWHILE, THE WEI ARMY MARCHED INTO HANZHONG FACING LITTLE RESISTANCE


WITH THE LIGHTNING QUICK CAPTURE OF YANGPING PASS, HANZHONG SOON FELL INTO WEI HANDS

ONCE HANZHONG FELL, WANG HAN SURRENDERED YUE QI TING.

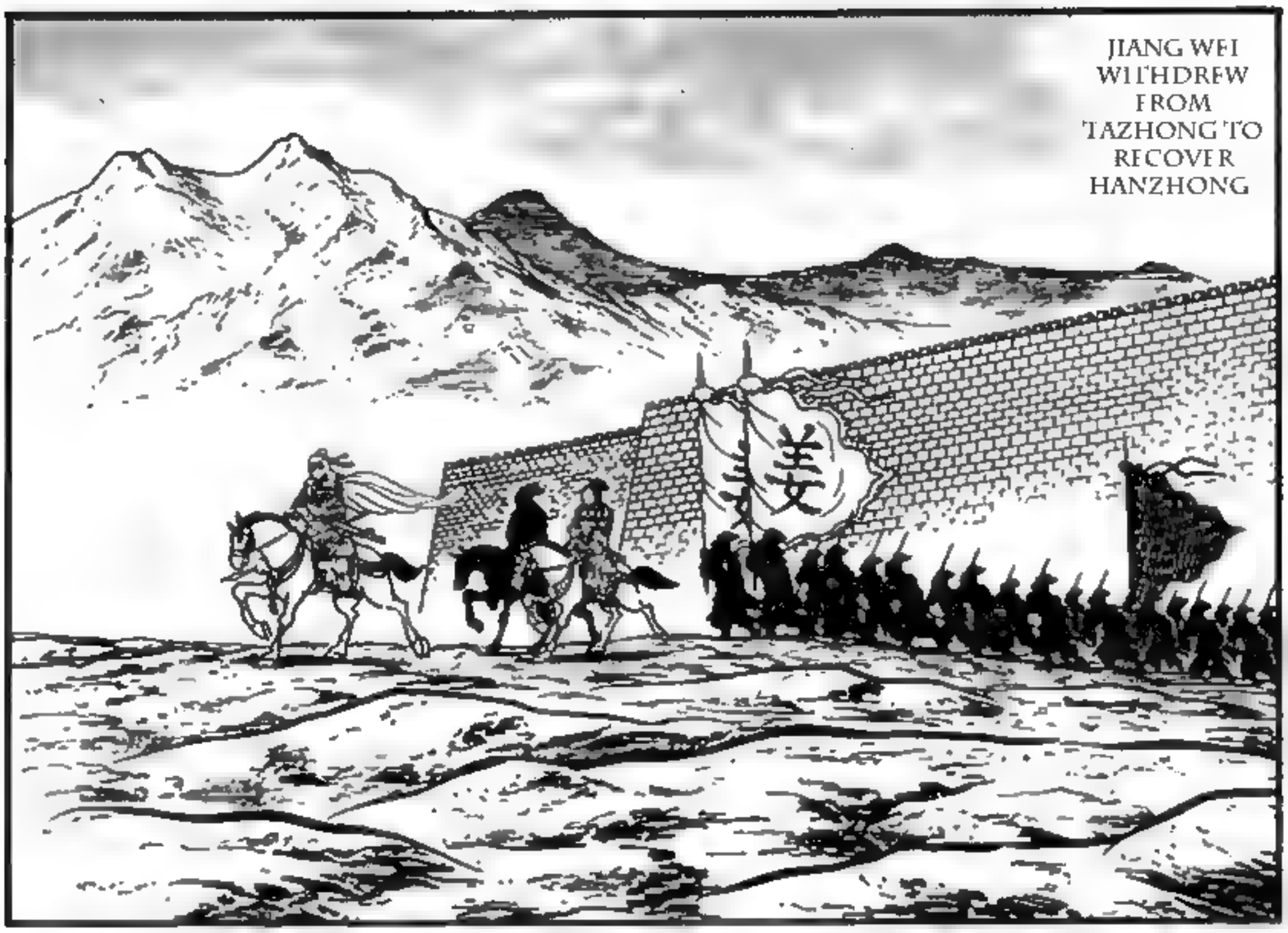

AND JIANG BIN SURRENDERED HANCHENG TO WEI

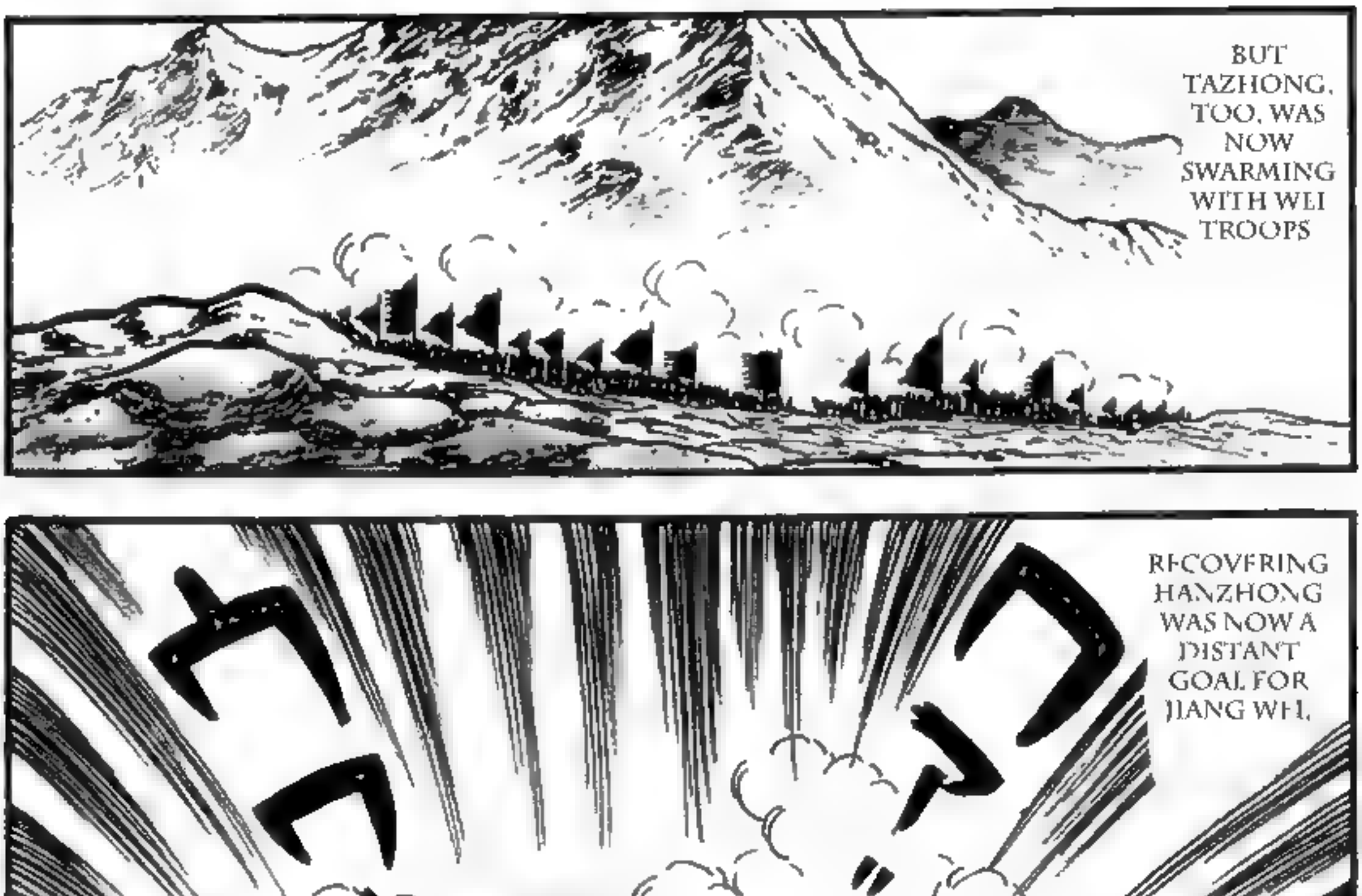
YES, AND ENEMY FORCES WILL SOON ARRIVE HERE AS WELL.

WHAT!? YANGPING PASS, HANZHONG, YUECHENG, AND HANCHENG ARE ALL NOW IN WEI HANDS!?

FINE, I WILL RECOVER HANZHONG BY MY HANDS THEN! WE WILL MARCH OUT AT ONCE!

DAMN THOSE INCOMPETENT FOOLS...!

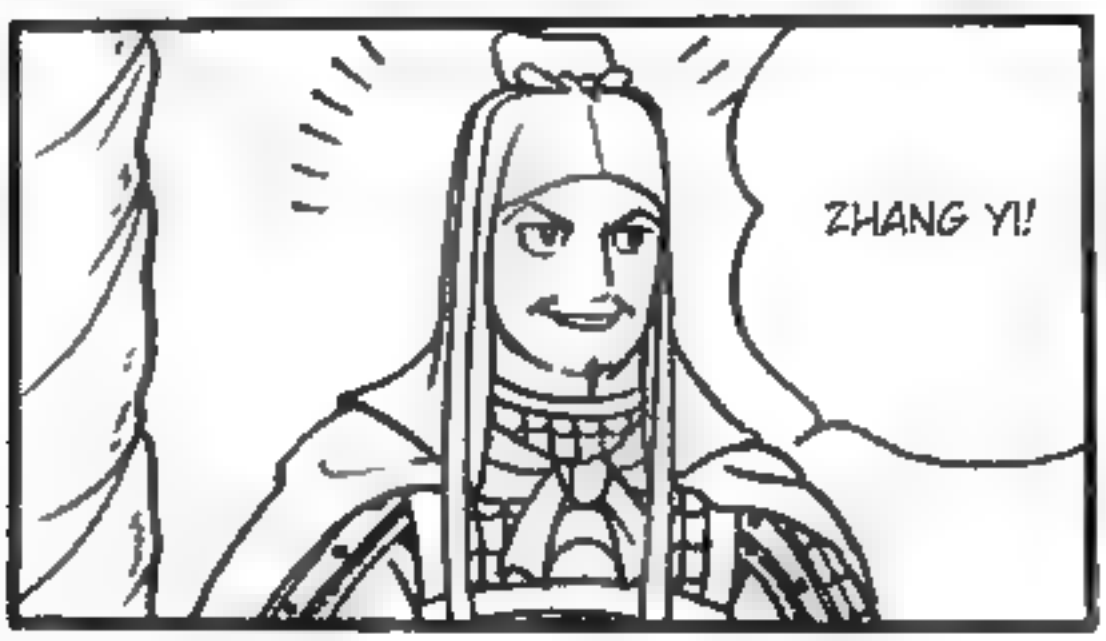

JIANG WEI WITHDREW FROM TAZHONG TO RECOVER HANZHONG
HM!?


BUT TAZHONG, TOO, WAS NOW SWARMING WITH WEI TROOPS
RECOVERING HANZHONG WAS NOW A DISTANT GOAL FOR JIANG WEI.

AS HE HAD TO PRIORITIZE BREAKING PAST WEI LINES FIRST.

HUFF HUFF

AGHH!


ZHANG YI!

COMMANDER JIANG WEI!

I'M AFRAID HE HAS FALLEN FOR THE WORDS OF SOME SPIRIT MEDIUM.

DO YOU KNOW WHY HIS MAJESTY HAS STILL YET TO SEND MORE TROOPS?

THAT'S ABSURD!

SHE PREDICTED THAT WE WILL SOON FALL TO SHU, SO HIS MAJESTY IS INCLINED TO SIT BACK AND REST.

SPIRIT MEDIUM!?

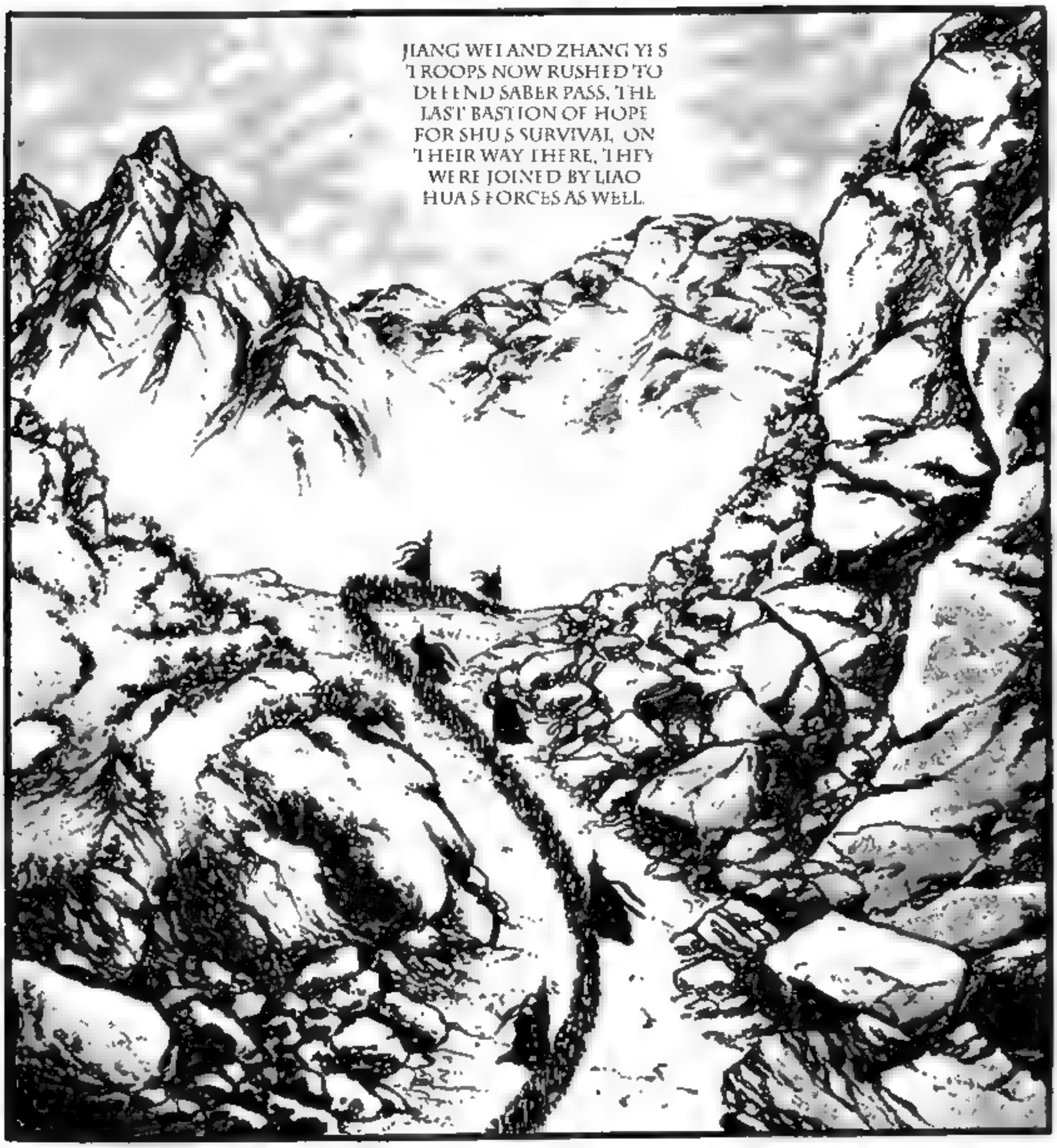
WHAT SHOULD WE DO NOW, SIR?

HOW CAN THE FATE OF THE WHOLE EMPIRE BE SWAYED BY THE REMARKS OF ONE SPIRIT MEDIUM!?

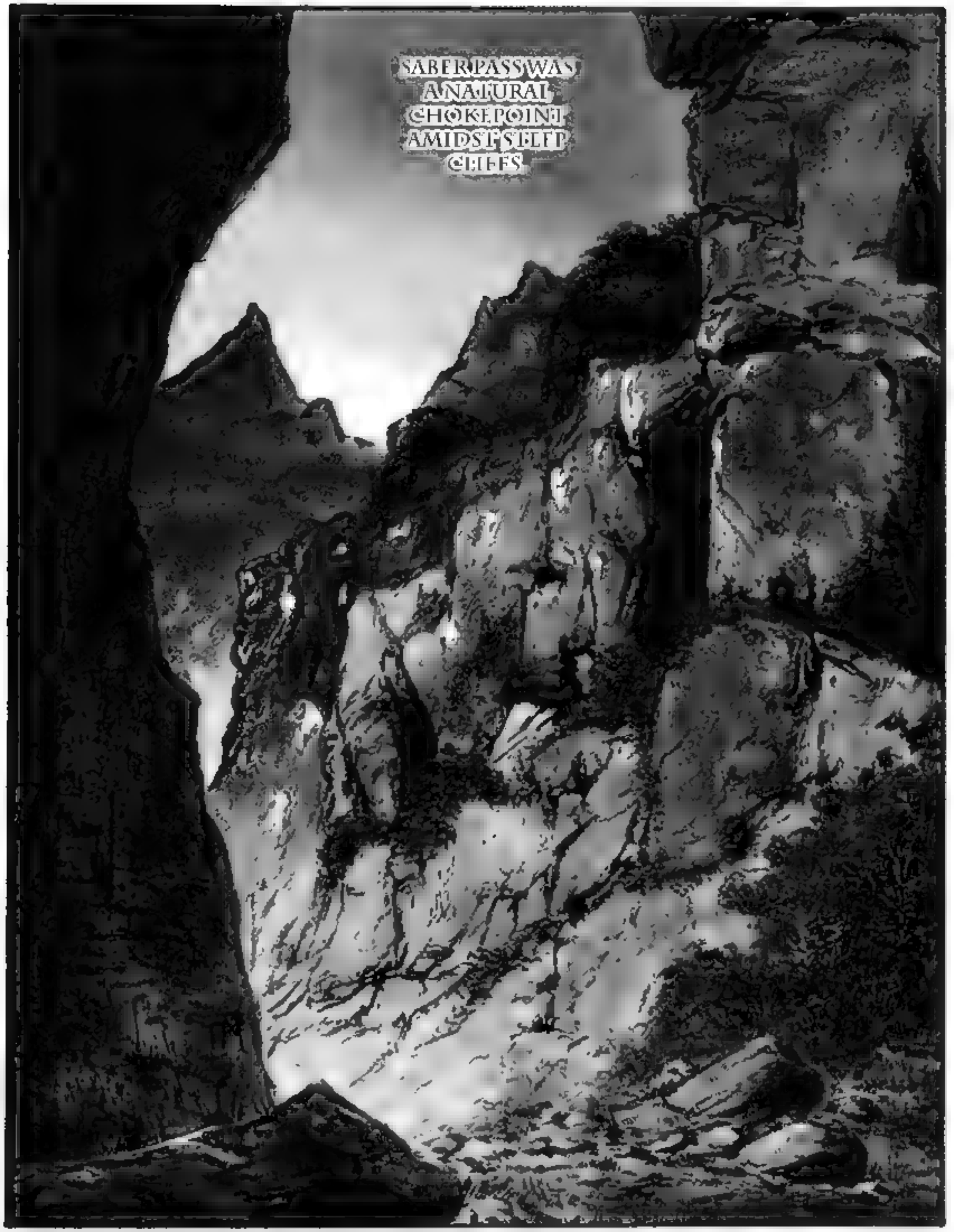
WE OTHER GENERALS SET OUT TO REINFORCE HANZHONG ONCE WE LEARNED OF THE INVASION, BUT BY THEN, IT WAS TOO LATE AS YANGPING PASS HAD ALREADY FALLEN. I THEN RUSHED TO TAZHONG INSTEAD AS I HEARD THAT YOU WERE SURROUNDED BY ENEMY FORCES.

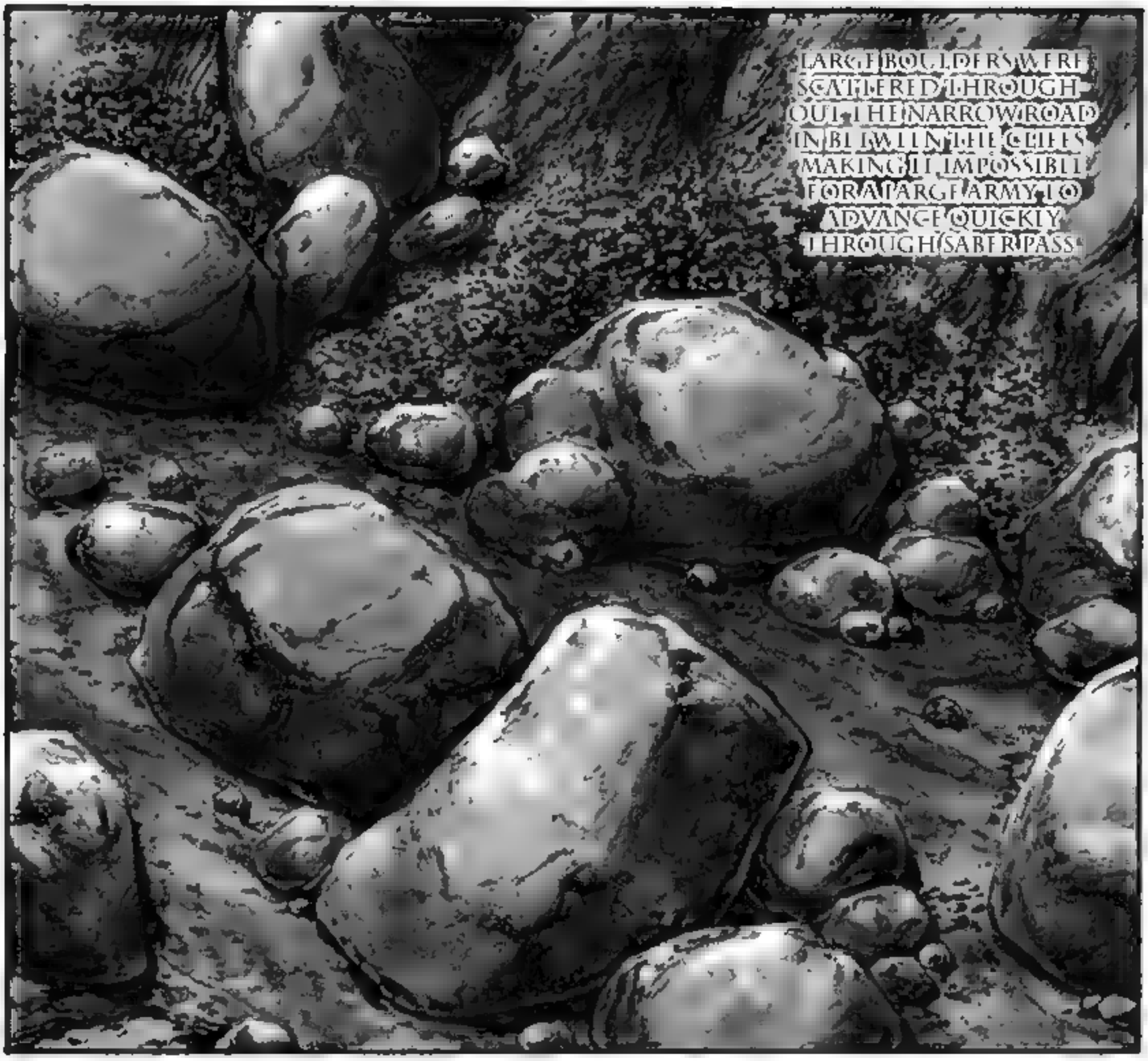
MNN...

YES, SIR.
LET US HEAD TO SABER PASS. IF THAT FALLS TOO, THEN SHU'S FATE IS SEALED.


JIANG WEI AND ZHANG YI'S TROOPS NOW RUSHED TO DEFEND SABER PASS, THE LAST BASTION OF HOPE FOR SHU'S SURVIVAL. ON THEIR WAY THERE, THEY WERE JOINED BY LIAO HUA'S FORCES AS WELL.

IMPENETRABLE PASS




LARGE BOULDERS WERE
SCATTERED THROUGH-
OUT THE NARROW ROAD
IN BETWEEN THE CLIFFS
MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE
FOR A LARGE ARMY TO
ADVANCE QUICKLY
THROUGH SABER PASS

蜀
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蜀

200,000 WEI TROOPS
NOW AIMED TO SEIZE
CONTROL OF THIS KEY
PASS IF SABER PASS
COULD BE CAPTURED
THEN SHU WAS AS
GOOD AS CAPTURED
AS WELL
鍾
部

THE PASS IS MORE TREACHEROUS THAN I HAD IMAGINED.

YES, ZHONG HUI.

BUT WITH OUR SHEER NUMBERS, IT TOO, SHALL FALL IN DUE TIME.

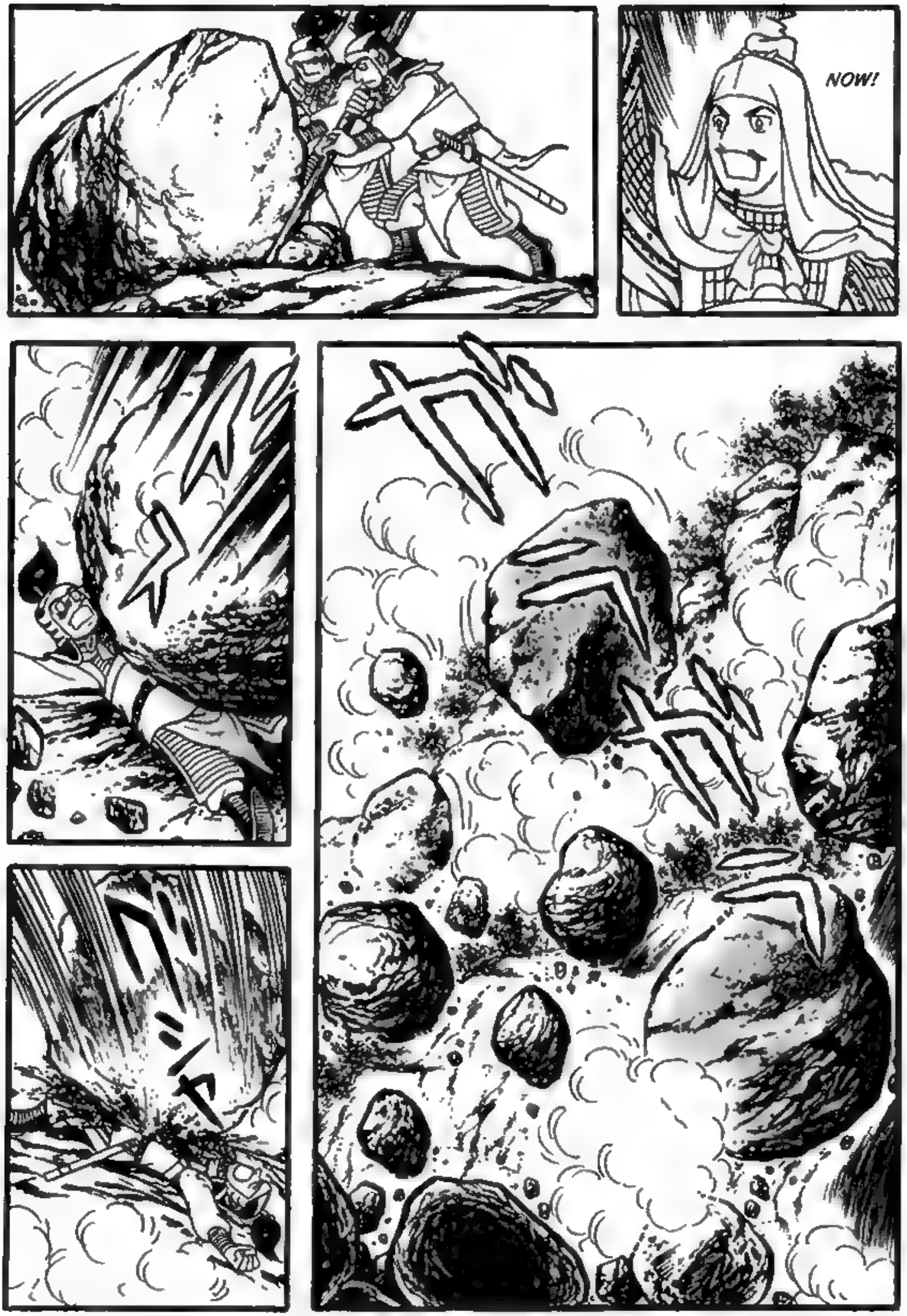
GIVE THE SIGNAL TO ATTACK!

鬼

LET THEM COME CLOSER.

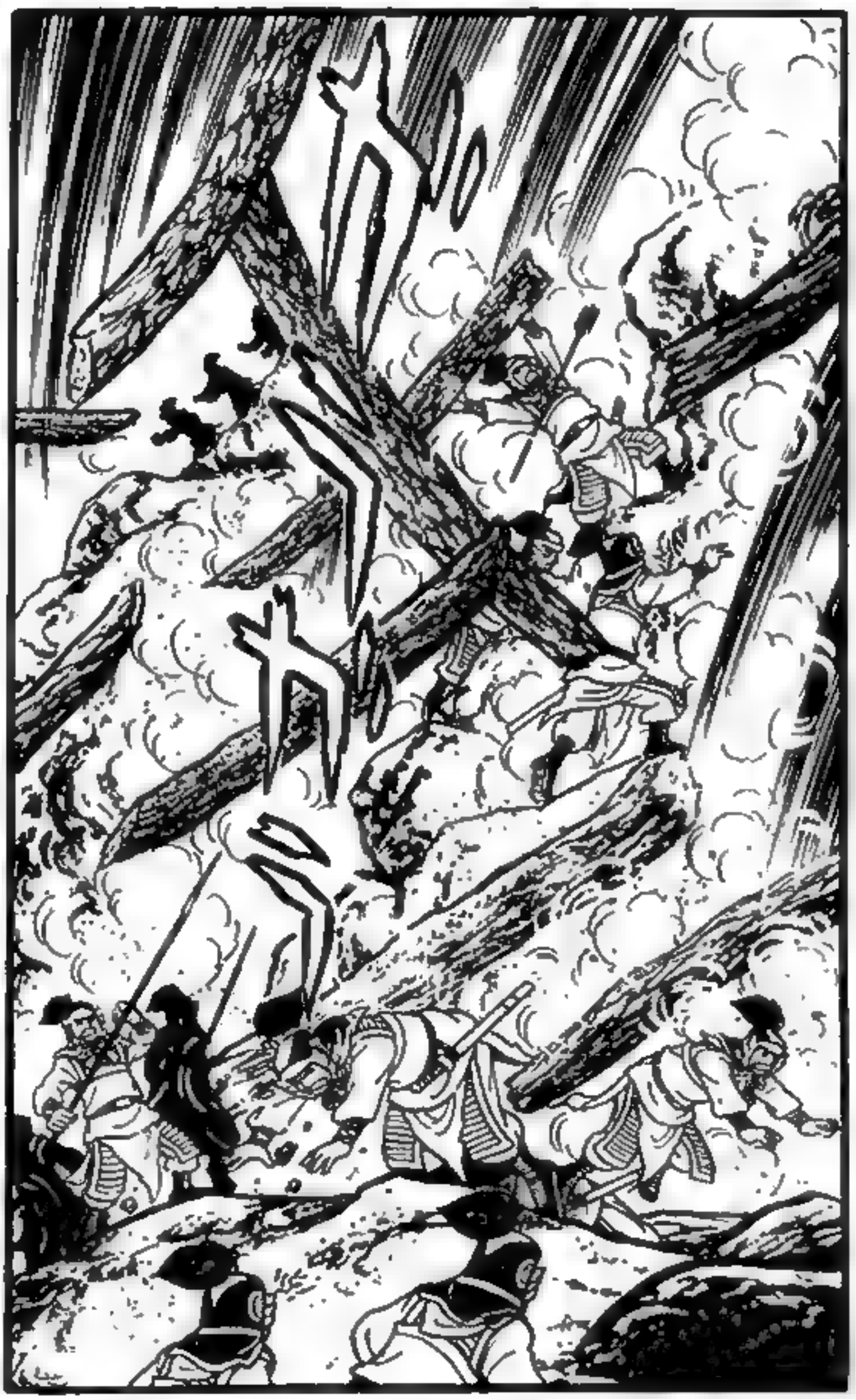
GOOD.

THE ENEMIES ARE ATTACKING, COMMANDER.


NOW!

DO NOT FALTER! KEEP CLIMBING!

...CURSES! THIS IS LOOKING BAD.



WITHDRAW! WITHDRAW!

GIVE THEM A TASTE OF OUR MULTI-SHOT CROSSBOWS!
HAHA.

GAHHH!

AGHH!

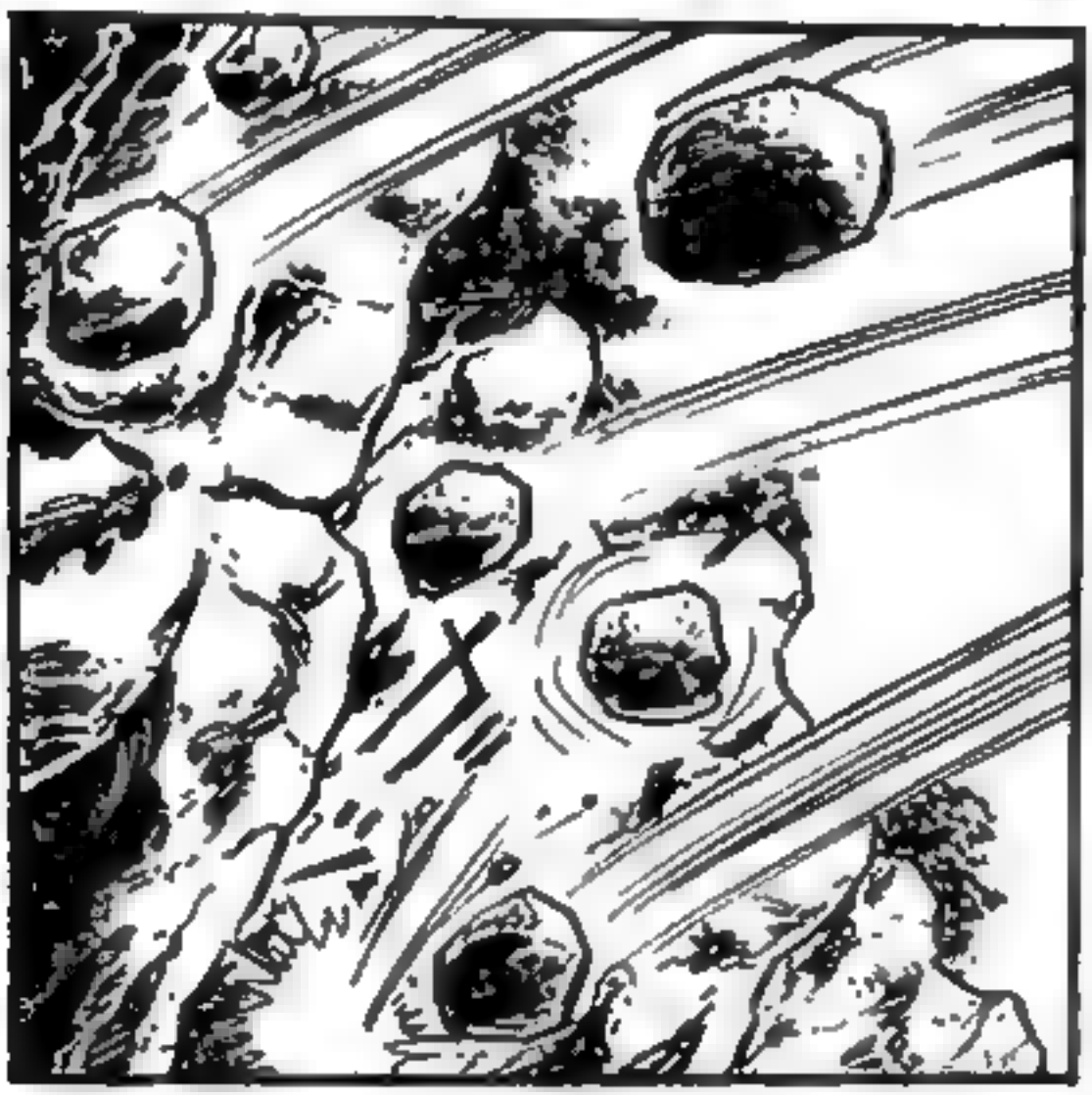
WITHDRAW! KEEP OUT FROM THE RANGE OF THEIR CROSSBOWS!

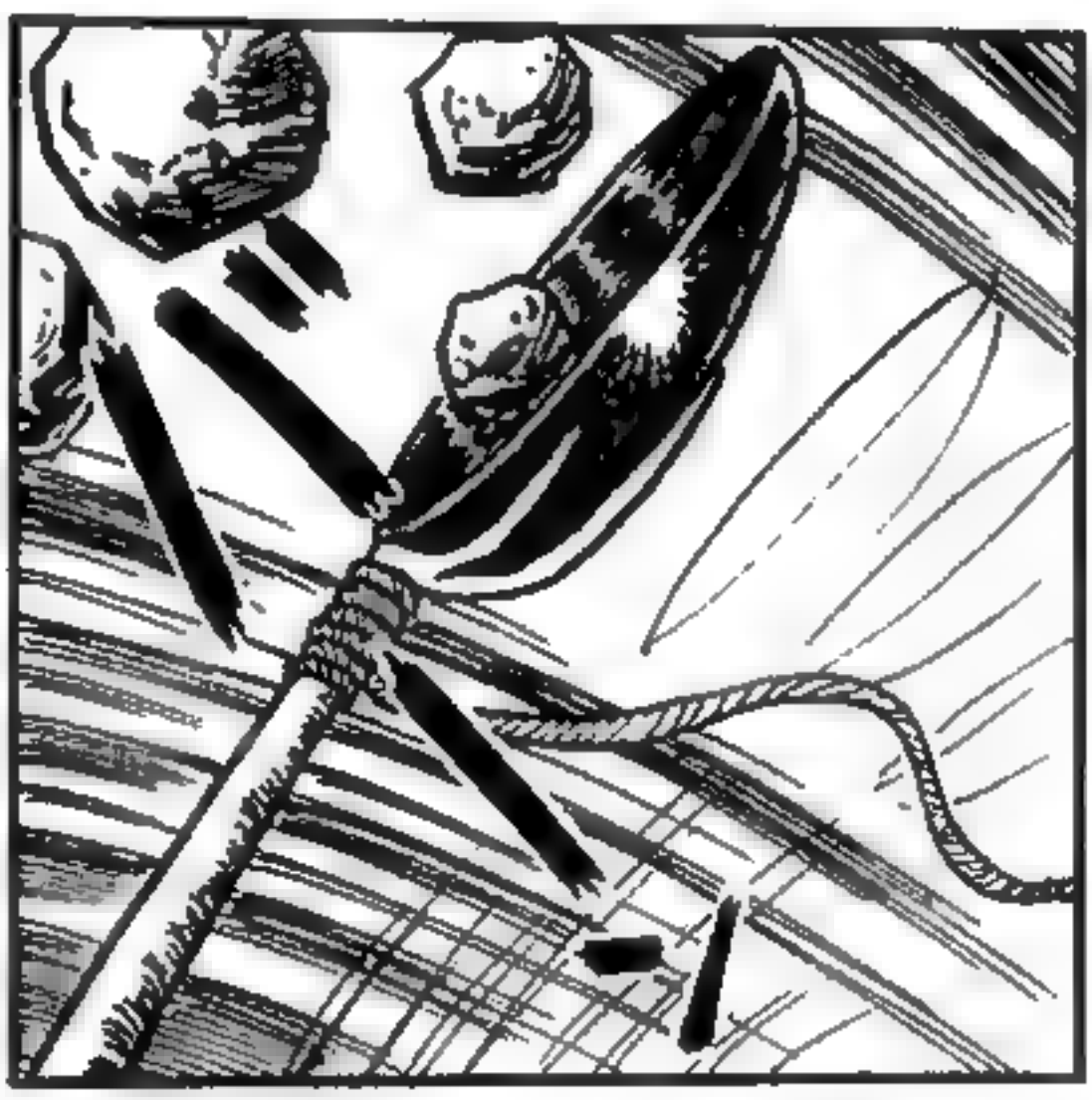
AGH!

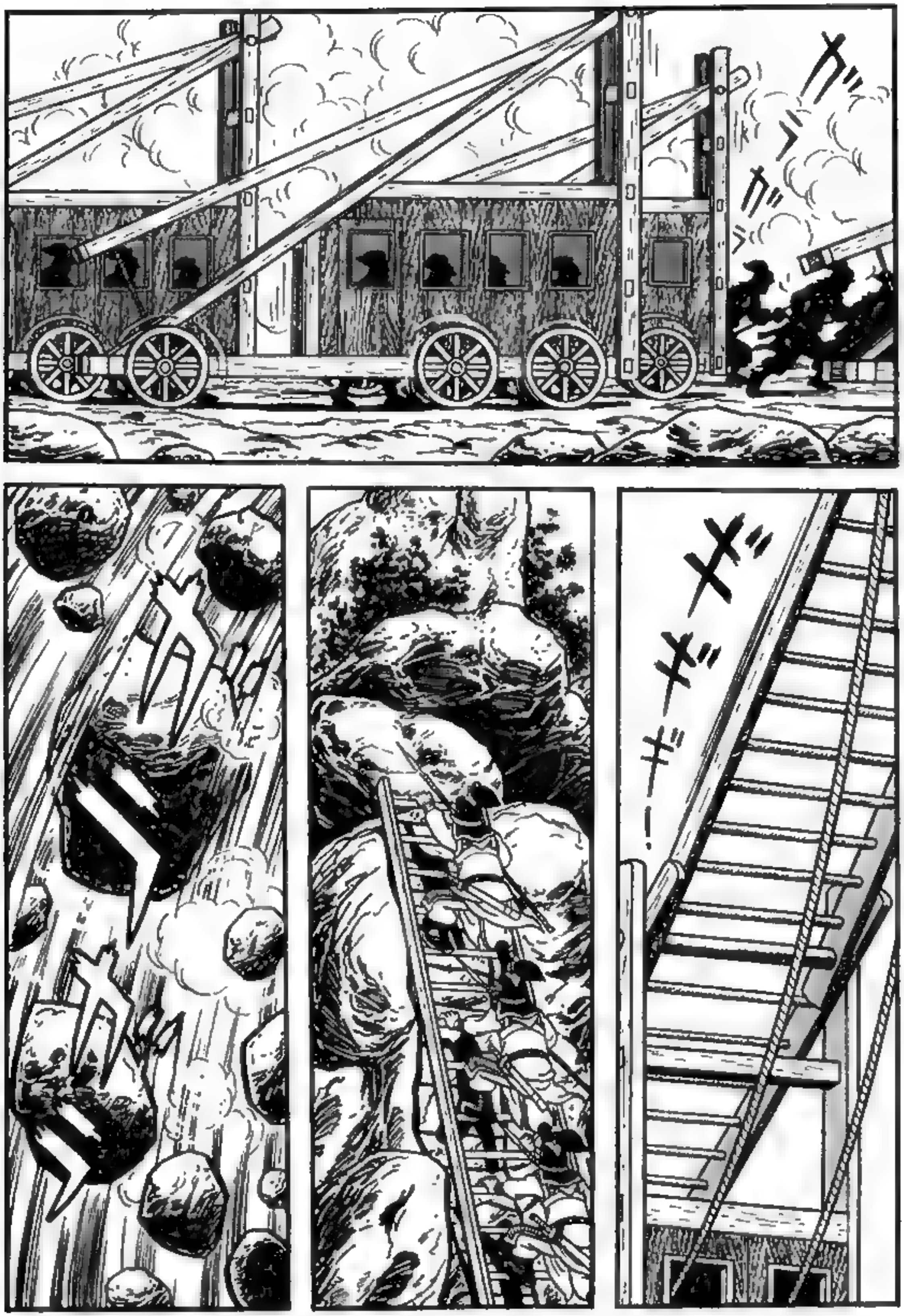
魏

HAHAHA! IF THEY THINK THEY CAN CAPTURE SABER PASS WITH SUCH A POOR-ATTACK, THEY BETTER THINK AGAIN!

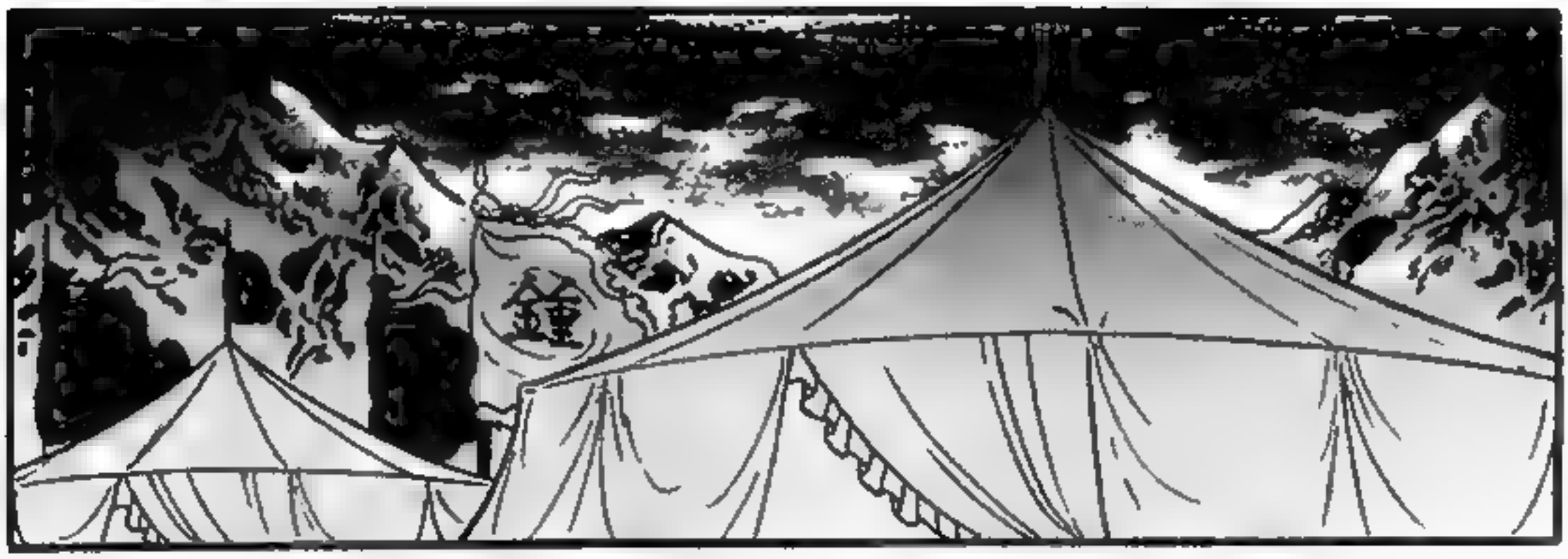
IN THE FOLLOWING DAYS, THE WEI ARMY TRIED DIFFERENT PLANS







BUT ALL THEIR PLANS RESULTED ONLY IN HIGHER CASUALTIES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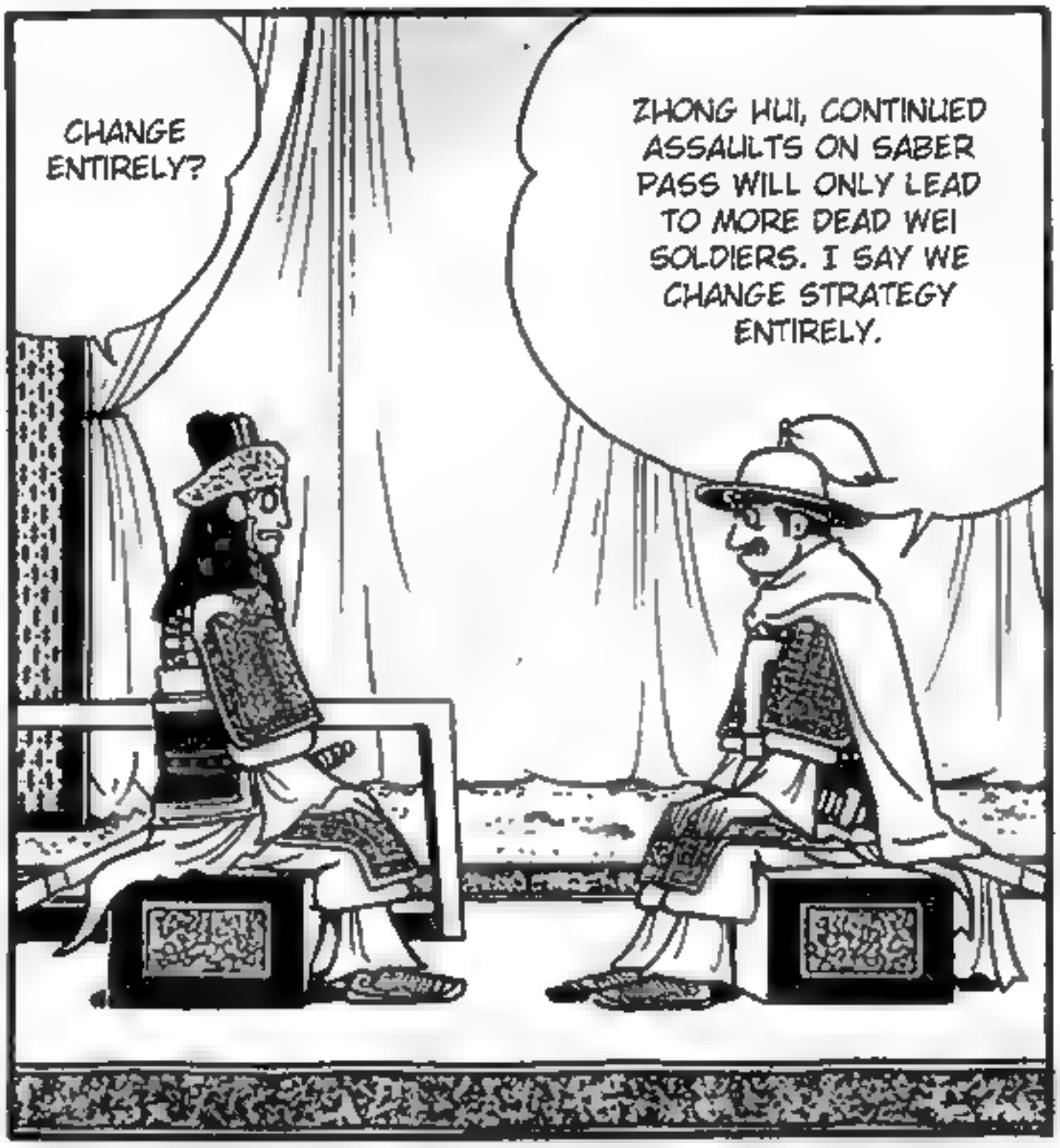
YES, HOW ABOUT INVADING SHU VIA YINPING INSTEAD?

YINPING!?


CHANGE ENTIRELY?
ZHONG HUI, CONTINUED ASSAULTS ON SABER PASS WILL ONLY LEAD TO MORE DEAD WEI SOLDIERS. I SAY WE CHANGE STRATEGY ENTIRELY.

YES, BUT ACCORDING TO SPY REPORTS, THERE ARE FEWER SHU SOLDIERS DEFENDING IT.

ARE YOU MAD, DENG AI!? THE MOUNTAINS OF YINPING ARE INFAMOUS FOR THEIR TREACHEROUS TERRAIN.

I ADMIT OUR ASSAULT ON SABER PASS IS NOT GOING FAVOURABLY, BUT WITH OUR NUMBERS, I'M CONFIDENT WE CAN SLOWLY BUT SURELY GRIND THEM DOWN.

WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS!? IT GOES TO SHOW HOW CONFIDENT SHU IS ABOUT YINPING'S NATURAL DEFENSES.

JIANG WEI AND HIS ELITE SHU TROOPS ARE DEFENDING SABER PASS. IT WILL BE FAR HARDER TO CAPTURE IT THAN YOU THINK, ZHONG HUI.

ARE YOU STILL HARPING ON YINPING!?

THEN AT LEAST LET ME ALONE TRY THE YINPING APPROACH.

I ACCEPT ALL RESPONSI-BILITIES FOR MY ACTIONS.

HMPH, THEN LET ME SAY THIS, DENG AI! YOU WILL HARDLY BE ABLE TO TRANSPORT FOOD TO YOUR TROOPS IF YOU GO TO YINPING. YOUR ENTIRE ARMY MAY STARVE TO DEATH TRYING TO CROSS THAT HELLHOLE!

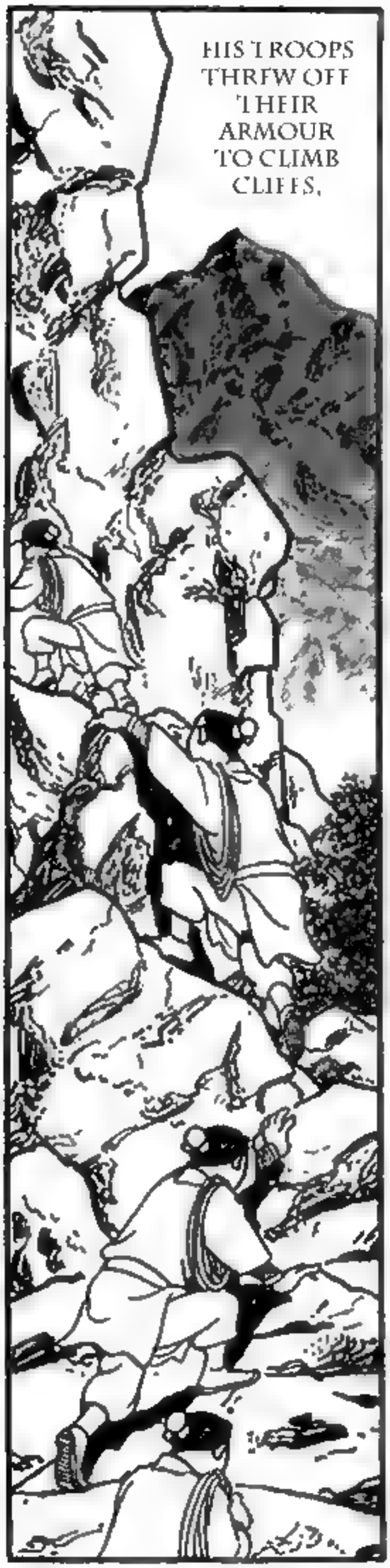
THEN I WILL HEAD TO YINPING TOMORROW WITH MY TROOPS.

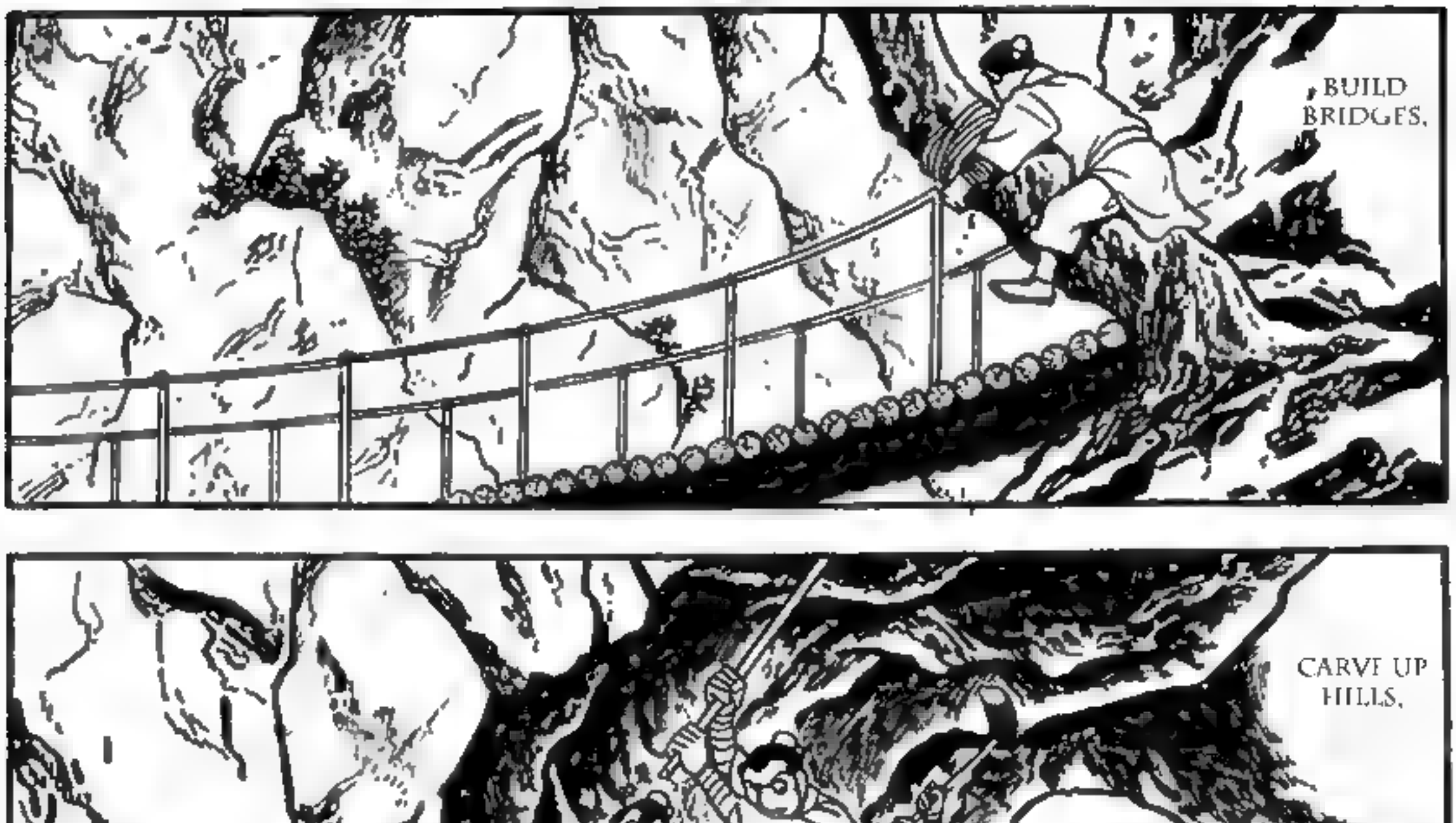
FINE, DO WHAT YOU WANT THEN!

DENG AI CONCLUDED THAT FURTHER ATTACKS ON SABER PASS WERE FUTILE THE ONLY PATH TO CHENGDU WOULD BE THROUGH YINPING

BUT ZHONG HUI'S WARNINGS COULD NOT BE DENIED IF DENG AI'S ENORMOUS GAMBLE FAILED, AN ENTIRE WEI ARMY WOULD BE LOST

FORGING A PATH



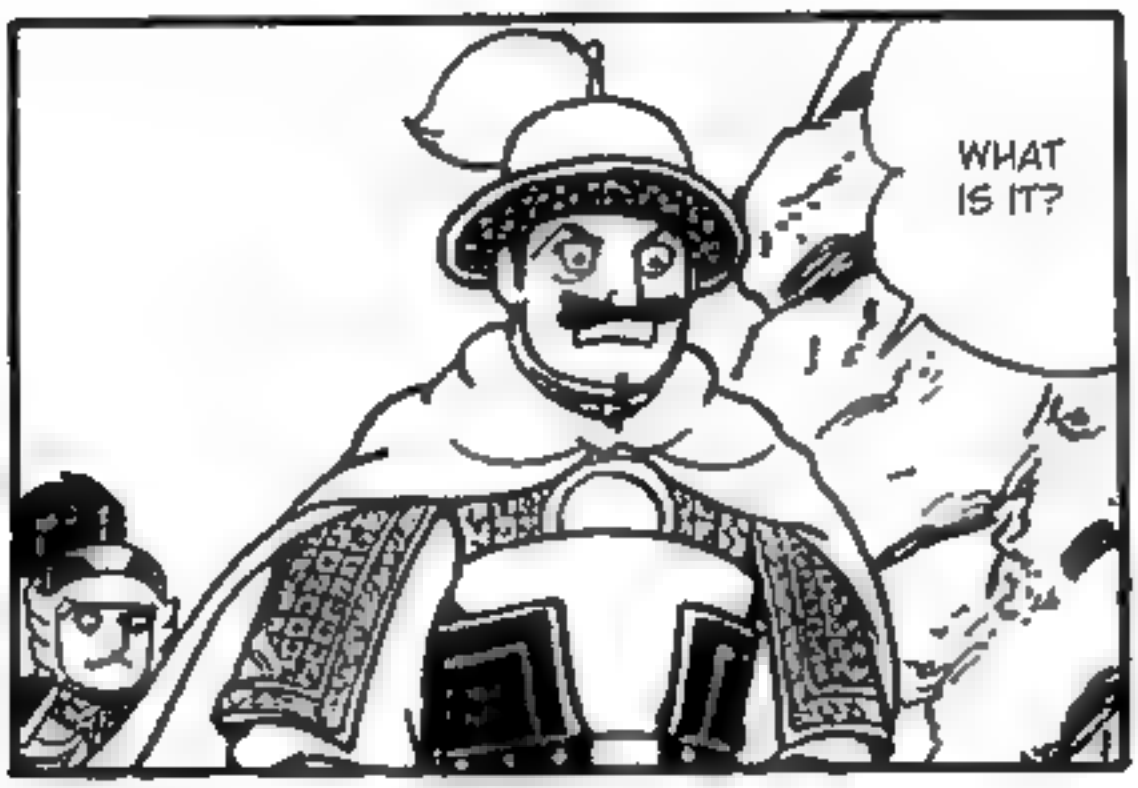

BUILD
BRIDGES.
CARVE UP
HILLS,

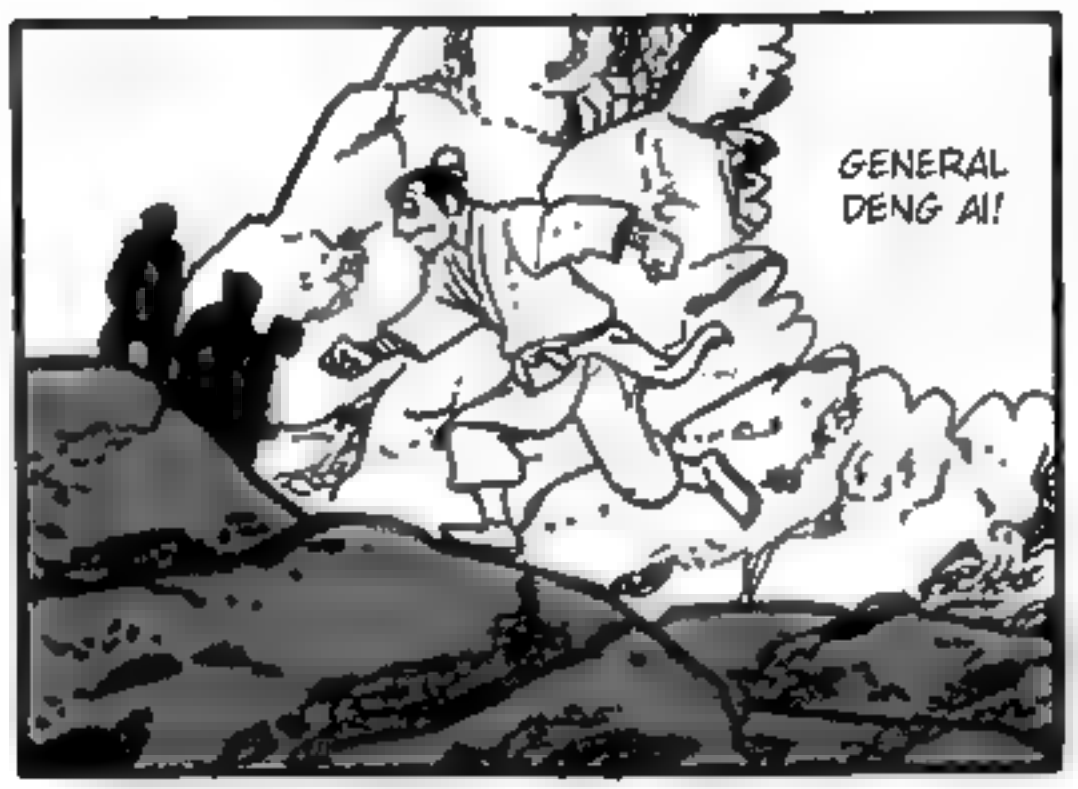
AND
INSERT
WOODEN
BEAMS
INTO
CLIFFS.

NEEDLESS TO SAY MANY FELL TO THEIR DEATHS DURING THIS HAZARDOUS WORK

TO BUILD GALLERY ROADS

FOOD WAS SCARCE AS WELL, AND THE VIET TROOPS HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO GRIT THEIR TEETHS AND ENDURE


WHAT IS IT?


GENERAL DENG AI!

WE'VE REACHED A DEAD-END, SIR!

AHHH!

THE CLIFFS ARE TOO FAR APART FOR US TO BUILD A BRIDGE.
MNN...
LISTEN UP! I DOUBT WE EVEN HAVE ENOUGH FOOD TO LAST OUR JOURNEY BACK! HOWEVER, JUST AHEAD FROM HERE IS JIANGYOU WITH ITS RICH FIELDS AND GRAIN! SO CHOOSE! FORGE ON AHEAD, OR TURN BACK AND STARVE TO DEATH!

WE'LL JUST HAVE TO CLIMB ALL THE WAY DOWN THIS CLIFF, AND THEN ALL THE WAY UP THAT CLIFF!

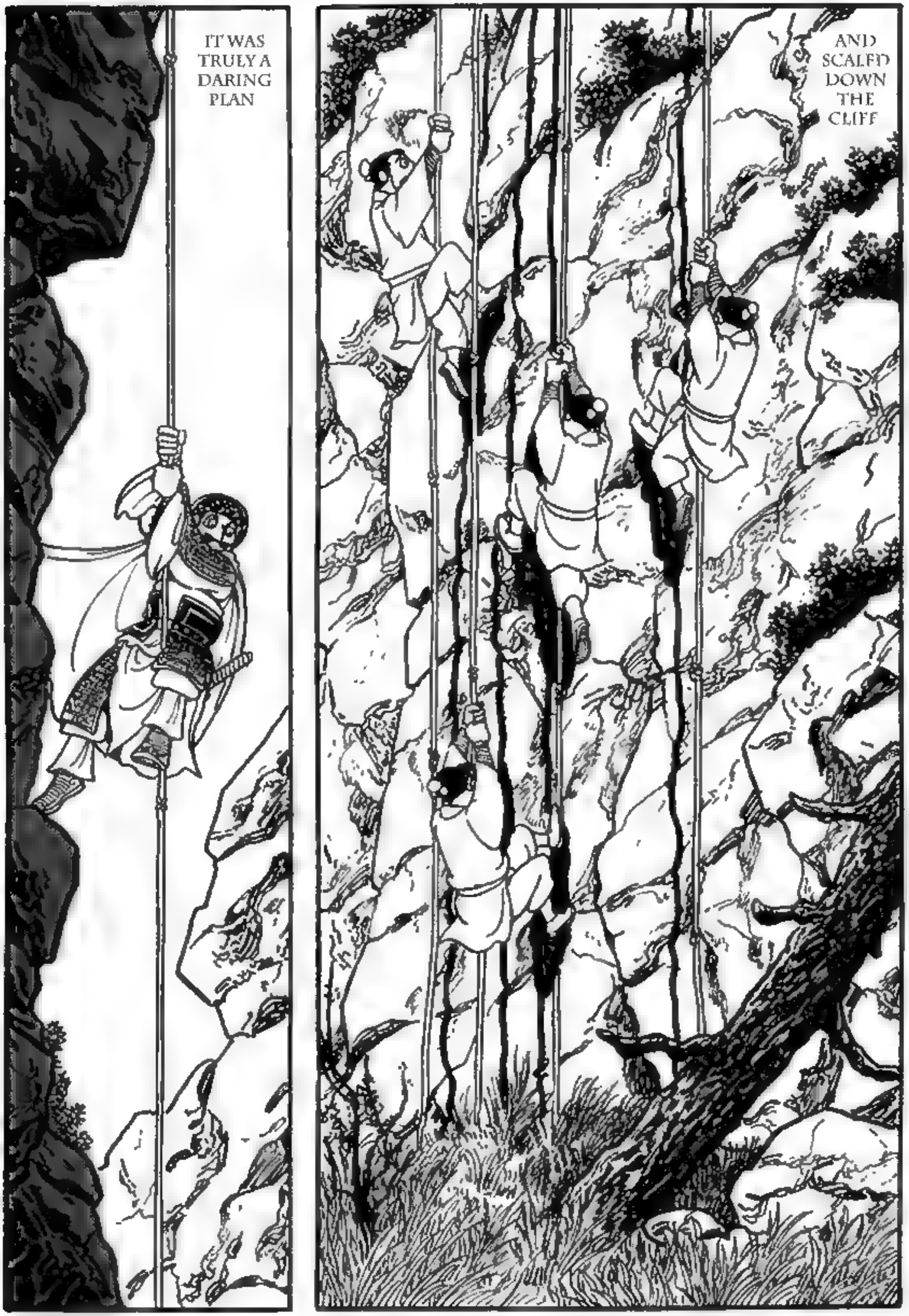
BUT HOW ON EARTH CAN WE CROSS, SIR?

THEY SAY ONE MUST ENTER A TIGER'S DEN TO HUNT A TIGER'S CUB! THIS DANGEROUS PLAN IS OUR BEST SHOT AT CAPTURING CHENGDU!

THE WEI TROOPS TIED THEIR ROPES TOGETHER.

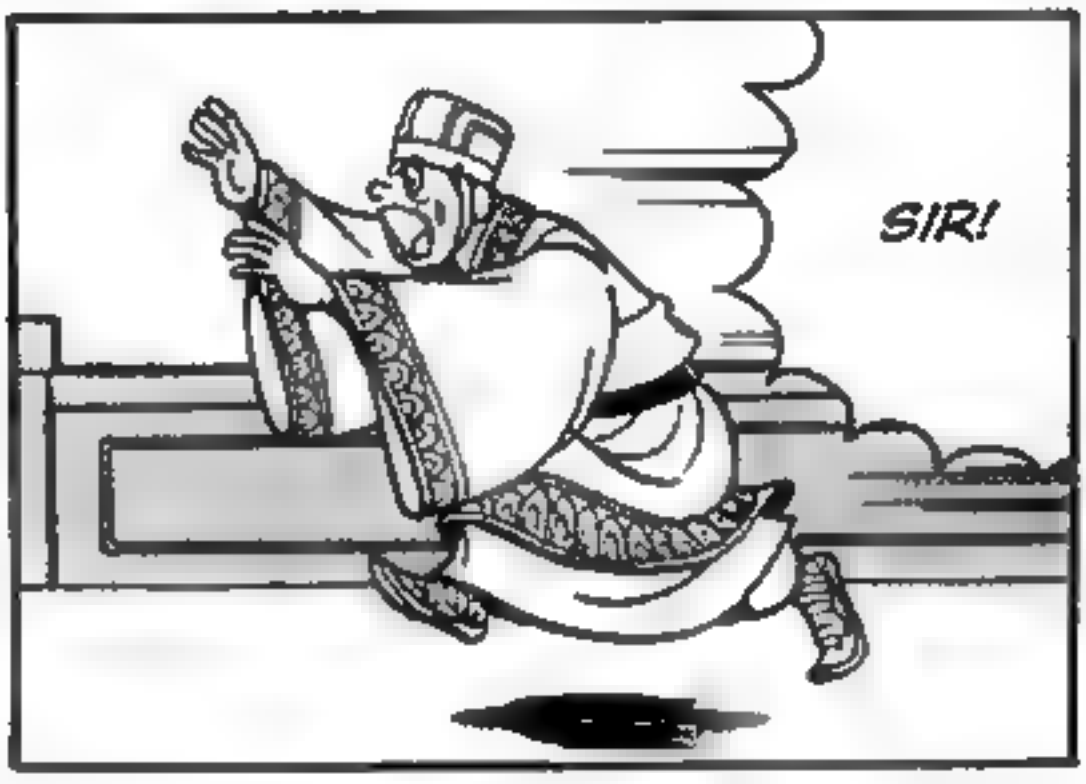
AFTER LOSING SO MANY COMRADES JUST TO MAKE IT HERE, WE CANNOT POSSIBLY RETREAT IN VAIN!

WE'LL JUST HAVE TO TRY!


IT WAS TRULY A DARING PLAN
AND SCALED DOWN THE CLIFF

JIANG
YOU
江油

WHAT ARE YOU YELLING FOR?


SIR!

THAT'S IMPOSSI-BLE! JIANG WEI SHOULD BE HOLDING UP THE ENEMIES AT SABER PASS!

I DO NOT KNOW HOW BUT THE ENEMIES ARE MOST CERTAINLY HERE!

WHAT!?
W-W-WEI TROOPS ARE SCALING JIANGYOU'S WALLS AS WE SPEAK!

AHH!

I WON'T BELIEVE IT UNTIL I SEE FOR MYSELF!

HEAR ME, PEOPLE OF JIANGYOU! WE HAVE ALREADY ENTERED YOUR CITY! RESIST, AND WE WILL BURN DOWN THE CITY AND KILL EVERYONE!

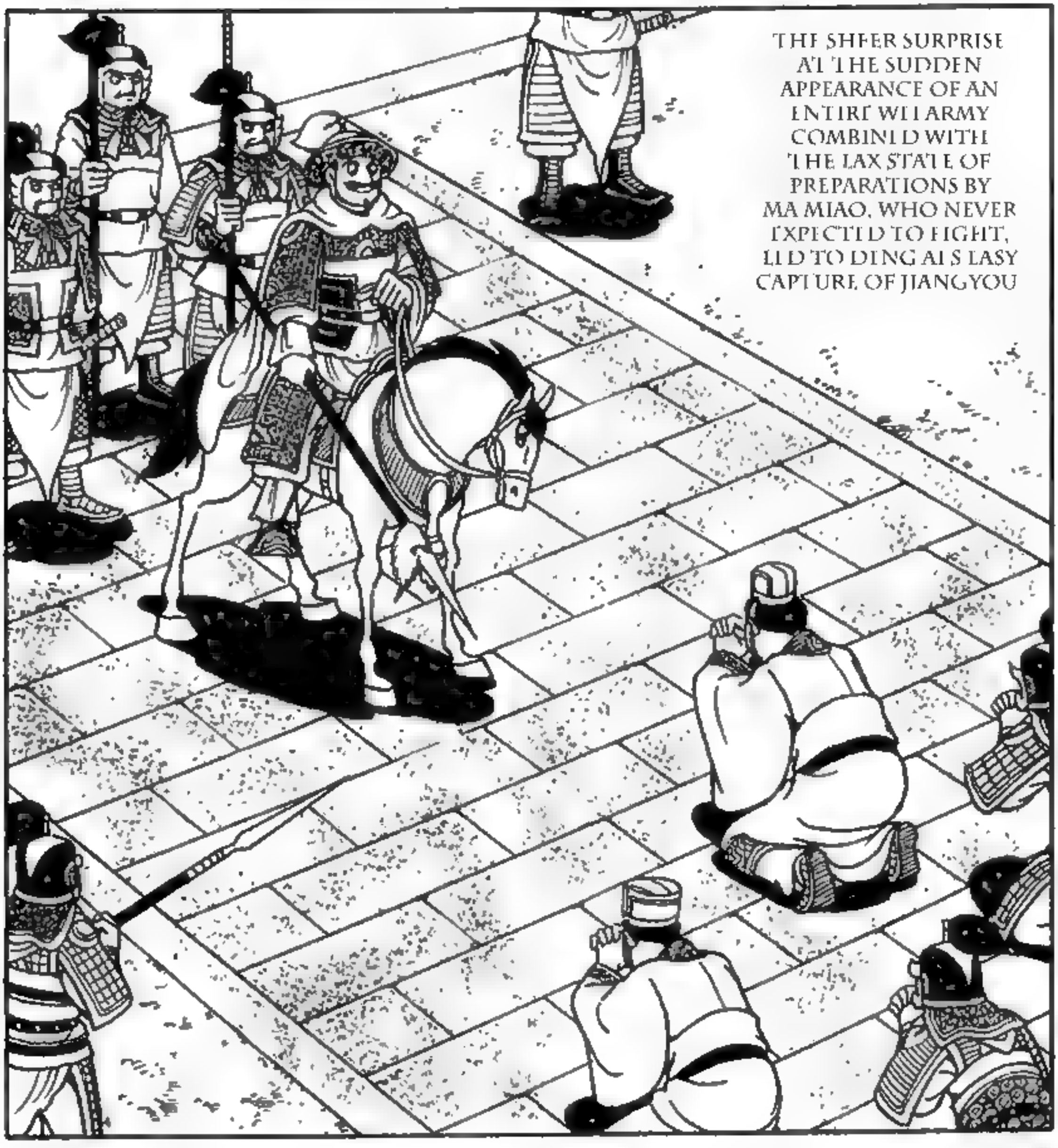
WE CANNOT HOPE TO RESIST!

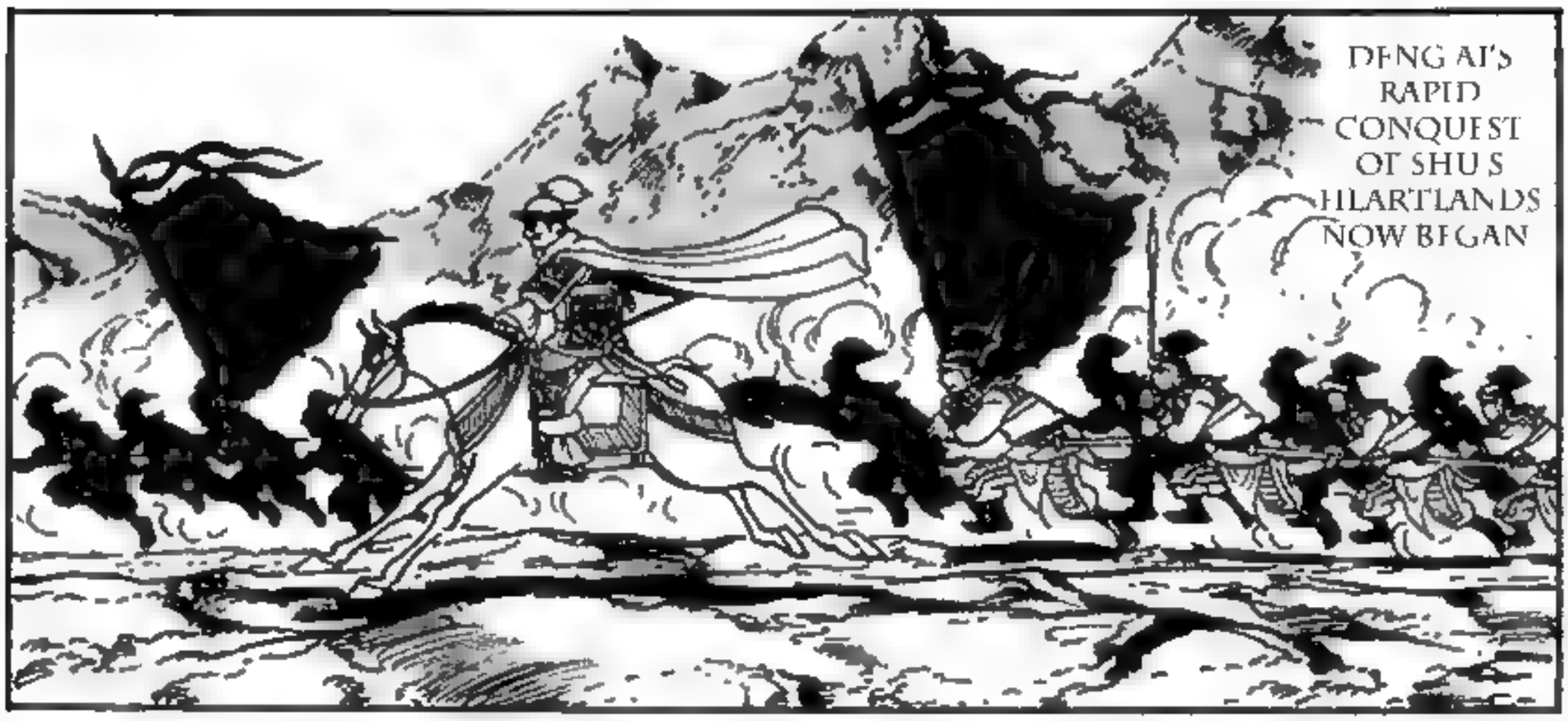
WHAT DO WE DO, GENERAL MA MIAO!?

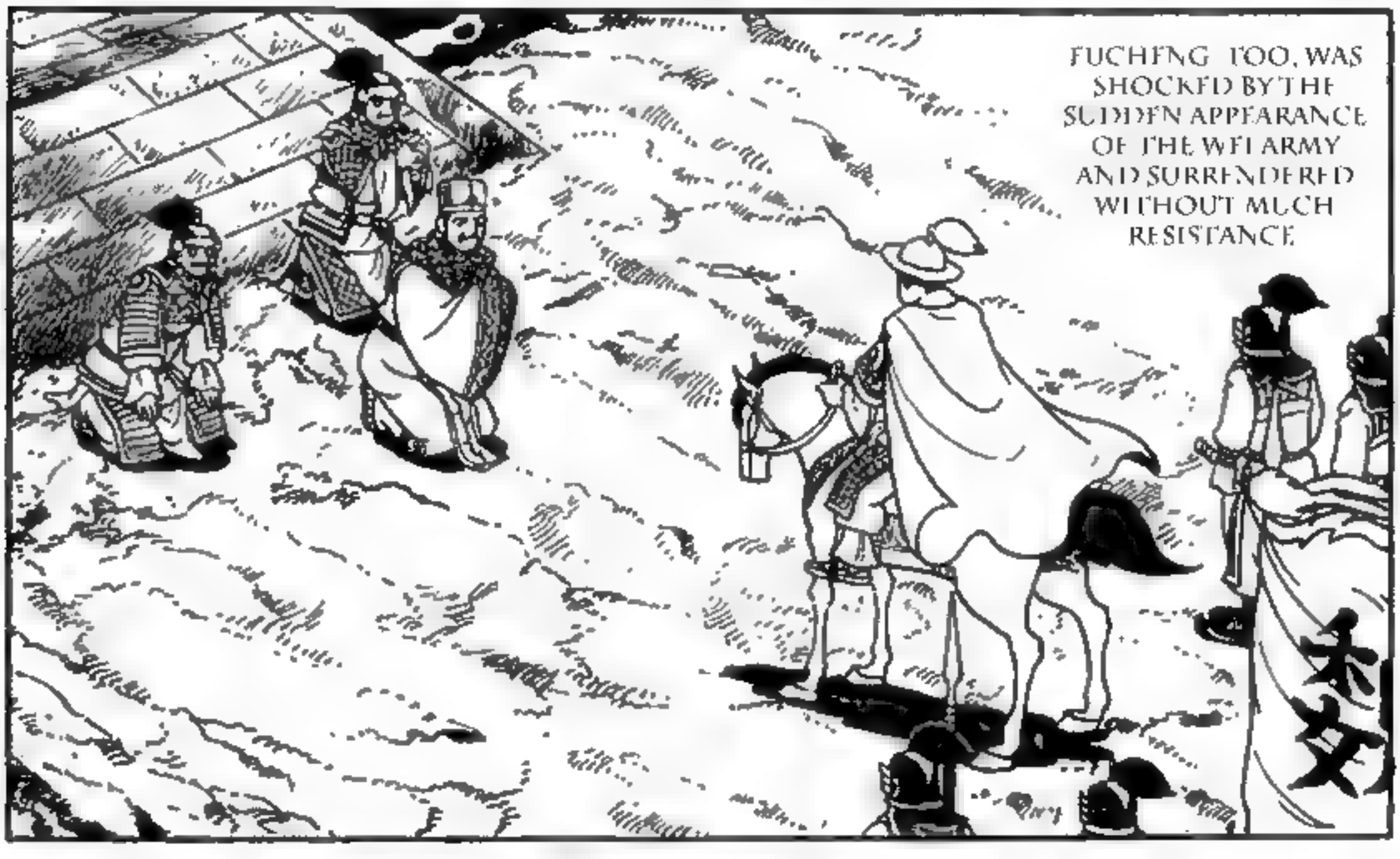
AGHH!

LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS!

IF WEI TROOPS ARE THIS DEEP INSIDE SHU, THEN THAT CAN ONLY MEAN ALL OUR LINES OF DEFENSE HAVE CRUMBLED!


THE SHEER SURPRISE AT THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF AN ENTIRE WEI ARMY COMBINED WITH THE LAX STATE OF PREPARATIONS BY MA MIAO, WHO NEVER EXPECTED TO FIGHT, LED TO DING AI'S EASY CAPTURE OF JIANGYOU

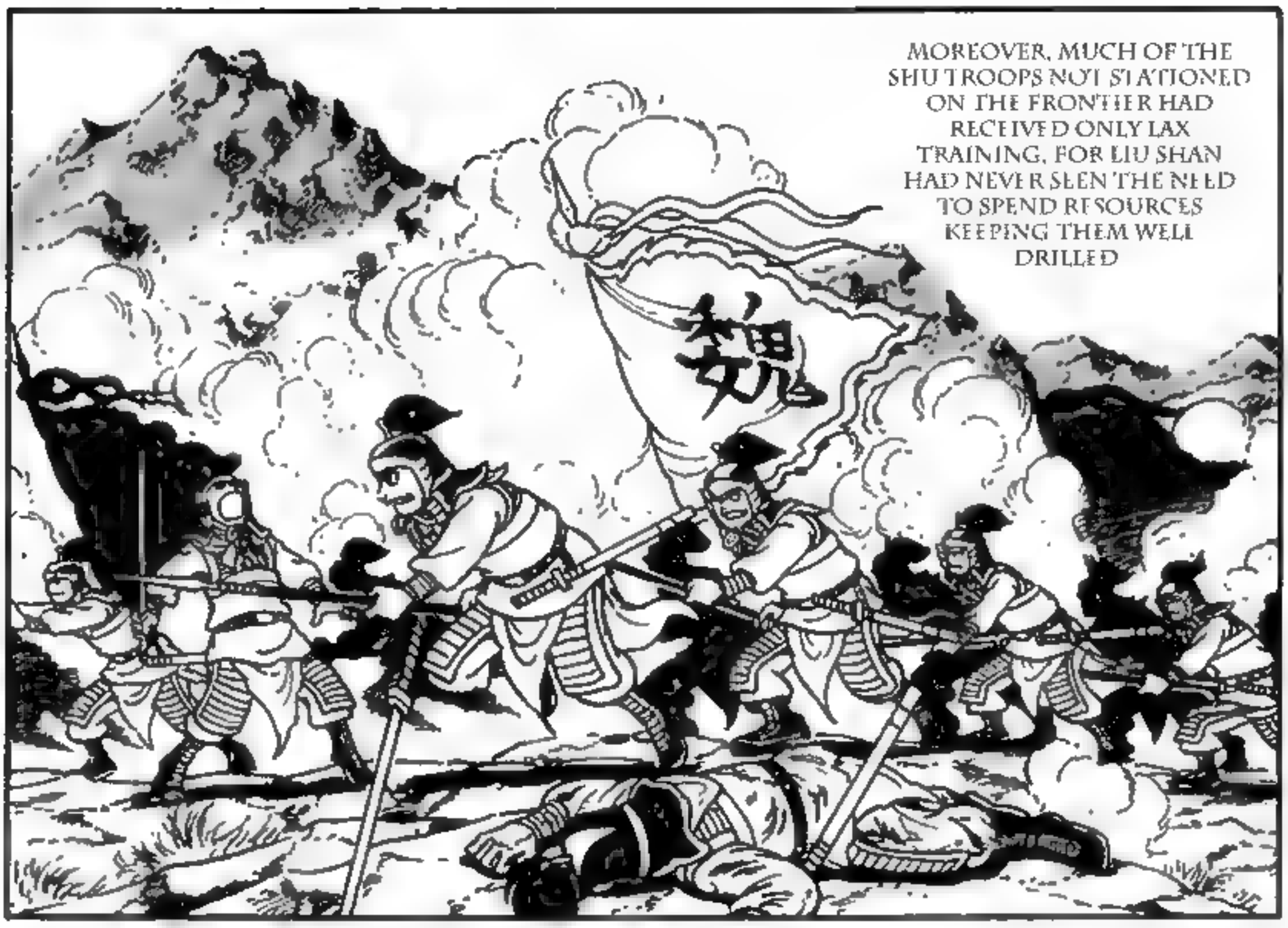

DENG AI'S
RAPID
CONQUEST
OF SHU'S
HEARTLANDS
NOW BEGAN


FUCHENG TOO, WAS
SHOCKED BY THE
SUDDEN APPEARANCE
OF THE WEI ARMY
AND SURRENDERED
WITHOUT MUCH
RESISTANCE

DENG AI
NOW LED
HIS ARMY
TO
MIANZHU

MIANZHU WAS DEFENDED BY ZHUGE ZHAN, THE SON OF ZHUGE LIANG AS THE SON OF THE FORMER HAN CHANCELLOR, HE WOULD PUT UP A STIFF RESISTANCE

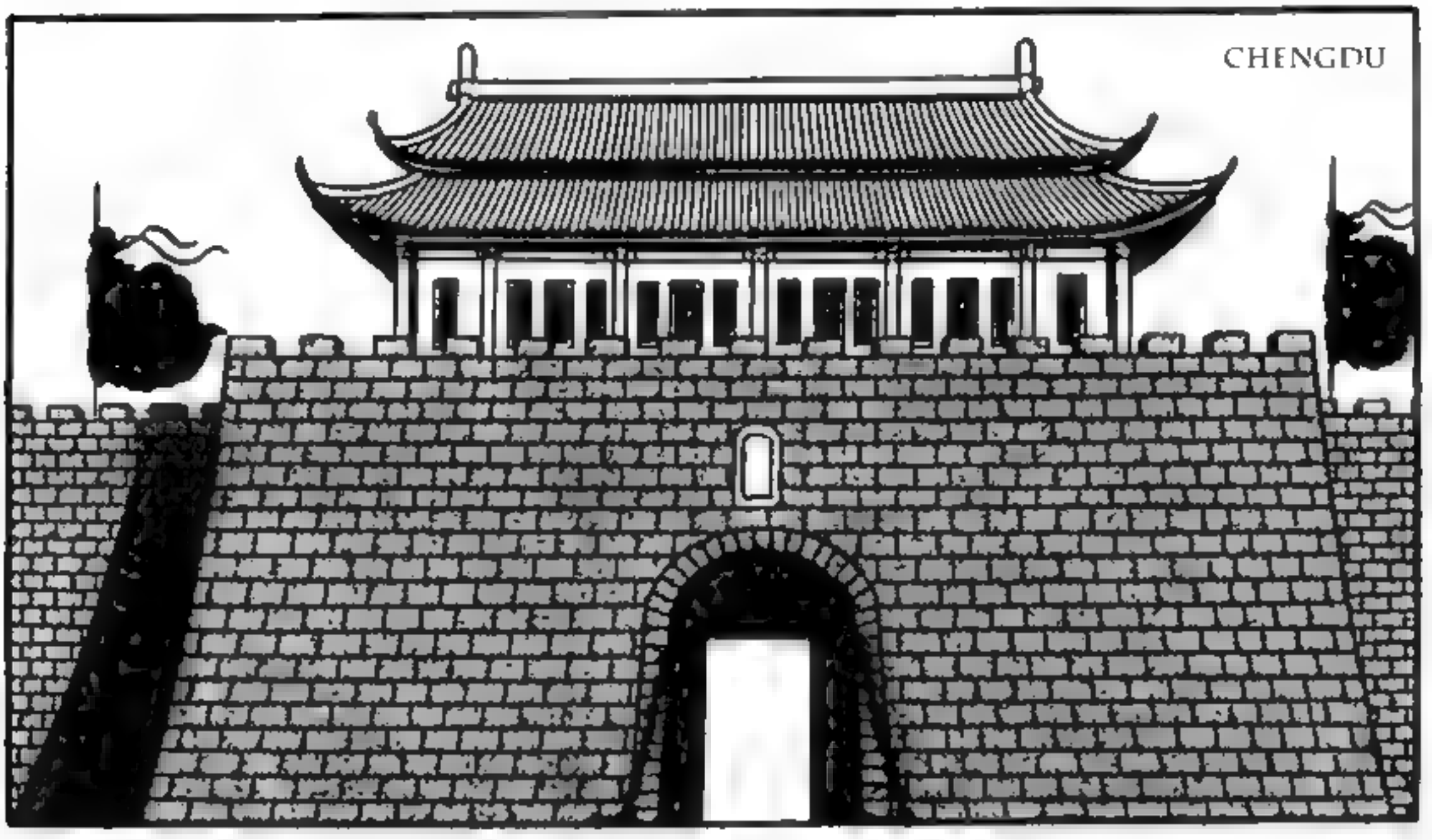
HOWEVER, DENG AI'S TROOPS KNEW THAT A SINGLE DEFEAT HERE WOULD LEAD TO THEIR ANNIHILATION, FOR THEY WERE ALL ALONE IN SHU'S HEARTLANDS. THUS EVERY SINGLE WEI SOLDIER FOUGHT WITH A FEROCITY UNMATCHED BY MIANZHU'S GARRISON

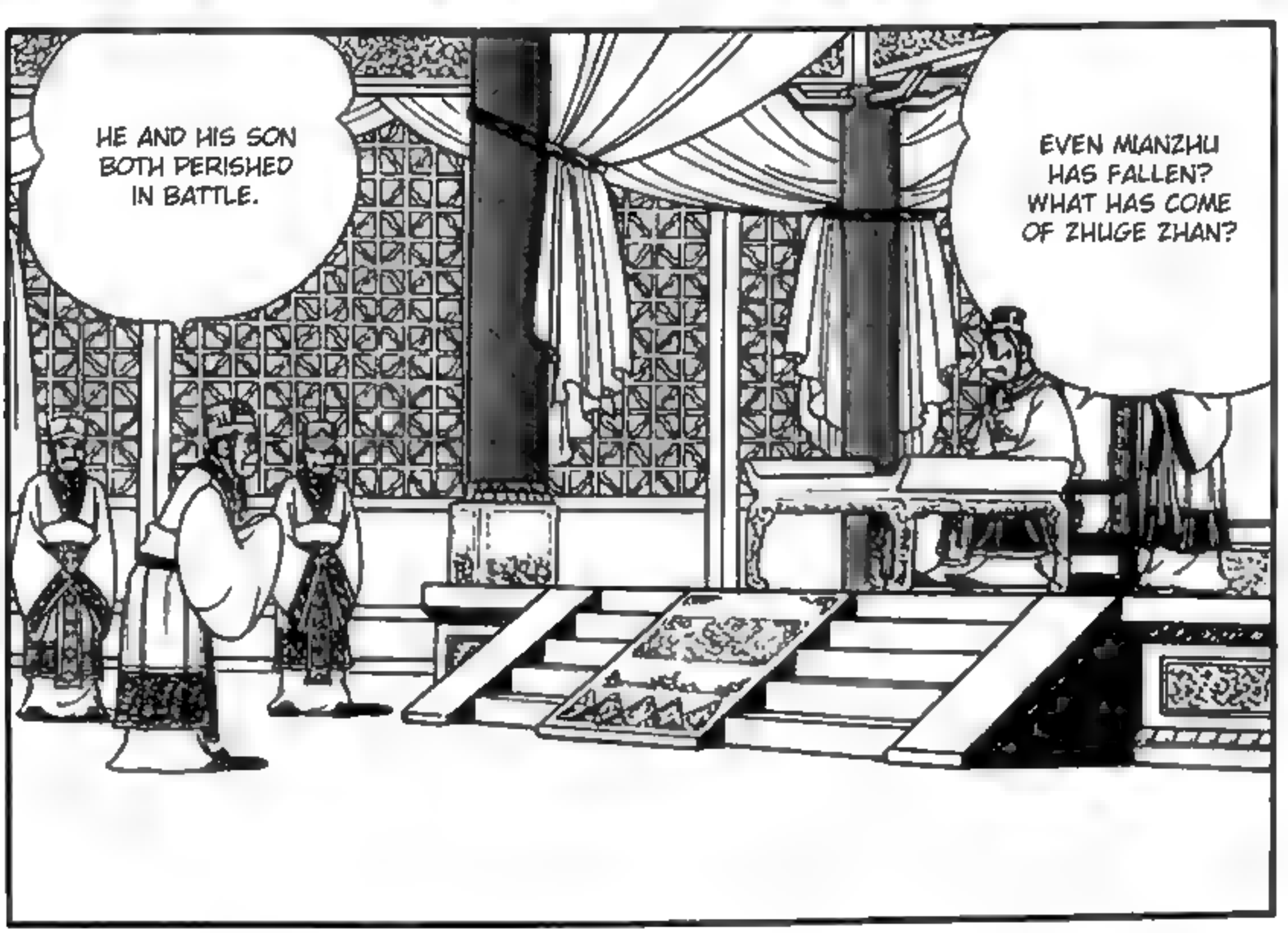

MOREOVER, MUCH OF THE SHU TROOPS NOT STATIONED ON THE FRONTIER HAD RECEIVED ONLY LAX TRAINING, FOR LIU SHAN HAD NEVER SEEN THE NEED TO SPEND RESOURCES KEEPING THEM WELL DRILLED
魏

MIANZHU, TOO, WAS NOW LOST TO DENG AI
魏

ZHUGE ZHAN AND HIS SON, ZHUGE SHANG, BOTH FELL IN BATTLE

DEATH OF LIU CHEN





THEY ARE HEADING RIGHT HERE AS WE SPEAK.

AND WHERE IS THE WEI ARMY NOW?

WE STILL HAVE OUR ALLIANCE WITH WU, YOUR MAJESTY. I SAY WE SEEK TEMPORARY REFUGE AT THE WU COURT.

THIS IS MOST DIRE. JIANGYOU, FUCHENG, AND MIANZHU HAVE ALL FALLEN IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE. WHAT DO YOU MEN SUGGEST I DO?

THEN MUST I FIGHT...?

I OBJECT! NO EMPEROR HAS EVER HELD ONTO HIS THRONE BY FLEEING TO A FOREIGN COURT.

FLEE TO WU!?

AS I SEE IT, WHILE WEI CAN HOPE TO CONQUER WU, WU CAN NEVER HOPE TO CONQUER WEI.

FIGHTING IS THE LAST THING I WISH TO DO. IS THERE NO DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION?

IF YOU SURRENDER, WEI WILL SURELY APPOINT YOU AS THE LORD OF SOME LAND.

SURREN-DER?

FLEEING TO WU AND BECOMING A MINISTER THERE IS ALREADY SHAMEFUL ENOUGH FOR YOUR MAJESTY. BUT TO THEN BECOME A MINISTER OF WEI ONCE WU INEVITABLY FALLS TO WEI WILL BE A SECOND HUMILIATION. IF SO, WHY NOT SIMPLY SURRENDER DIRECTLY TO WEI?

A LORD?

YES, AND THE PEOPLE OF SHU WILL ENDURE THE RAVAGES OF WAR NO LONGER.

THEN I CAN PEACEFULLY LIVE OUT MY DAYS IN COMFORT?

SEND A MESSENGER TO TELL DENG AI I WILL SURRENDER IF HE CAN GUARANTEE A RANK AND TITLE FOR ME IN WEI.

A SPLENDID PROPOSAL.

WHAT EMPEROR WILLINGLY SURRENDERS!?

OH? DO YOU HAVE A BETTER IDEA, MY SON?

THIS YOUNG MAN WAS NONE OTHER THAN LIU CHEN, THE 5TH SON OF LIU SHAN

OBJECTION!

YOU SUGGEST WE FIGHT?

OUR BRAVE TROOPS LED BY JIANG WEI STILL HOLD OUT AT SABER PASS! IF WE HOLD OUT HERE, THEN THEY WILL EVENTUALLY COME TO OUR RESCUE AND TOGETHER, WE CAN DRIVE BACK THE ENEMIES!

EVEN IF LUCK ABANDONS US, AS LONG AS WE VALIANTLY DIE FIGHTING, THEN WE CAN FACE THE FORMER EMPEROR AND OUR ANCESTORS WITHOUT SHAME.

ARE YOU MAD!? EVEN THE CITIES DEEP IN OUR HEARTLANDS HAVE SURRENDERED! HOW CAN WE FEASIBLY RESIST!?

FATHER! I IMPLORE YOU TO CONSIDER THE GIANTS OF FORMER GENERATIONS WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES TO BUILD THIS EMPIRE!

THAT'S ENOUGH! AN IMMATURE BOY LIKE YOU CAN NOT UNDERSTAND HEAVEN'S CHANGING WILL!

HIS CHANCELLOR ZHUGE LIANG...

OUR ILLUSTRIOUS FOUNDER...

HIS BROTHERS GUAN YU,

趙

AS WELL AS
).HEROIC
GENERALS LIKE
ZHAO ZILONG,

AND
ZHANG
FEI...

AND
HUANG
ZHONG...

MA
CHAO,

IT WAS UPON THE
LIVES OF THESE
HEROES AND
COUNTLESS OTHER
MEN THAT OUR
EMPIRE WAS
PAINSTAKINGLY
FORGED.

TRAMPLE UPON THEIR LIFEWORK AND THROW AWAY THE EMPIRE IN A SINGLE DAY!?

HOW CAN, WE, AS THEIR DESCEND-ANTS...

SILENCE! I HAVE ALREADY DECIDED!

THINK HOW PITIFUL WE WOULD RENDER THEIR SACRIFICES! WE MUST FIGHT DOWN TO THE LAST MAN FOR THEIR SAKE AT LEAST...!

THROW THIS IMPUDENT BOY OUT!

FATHER, I BEG YOU! PLEASE RECONSIDER!

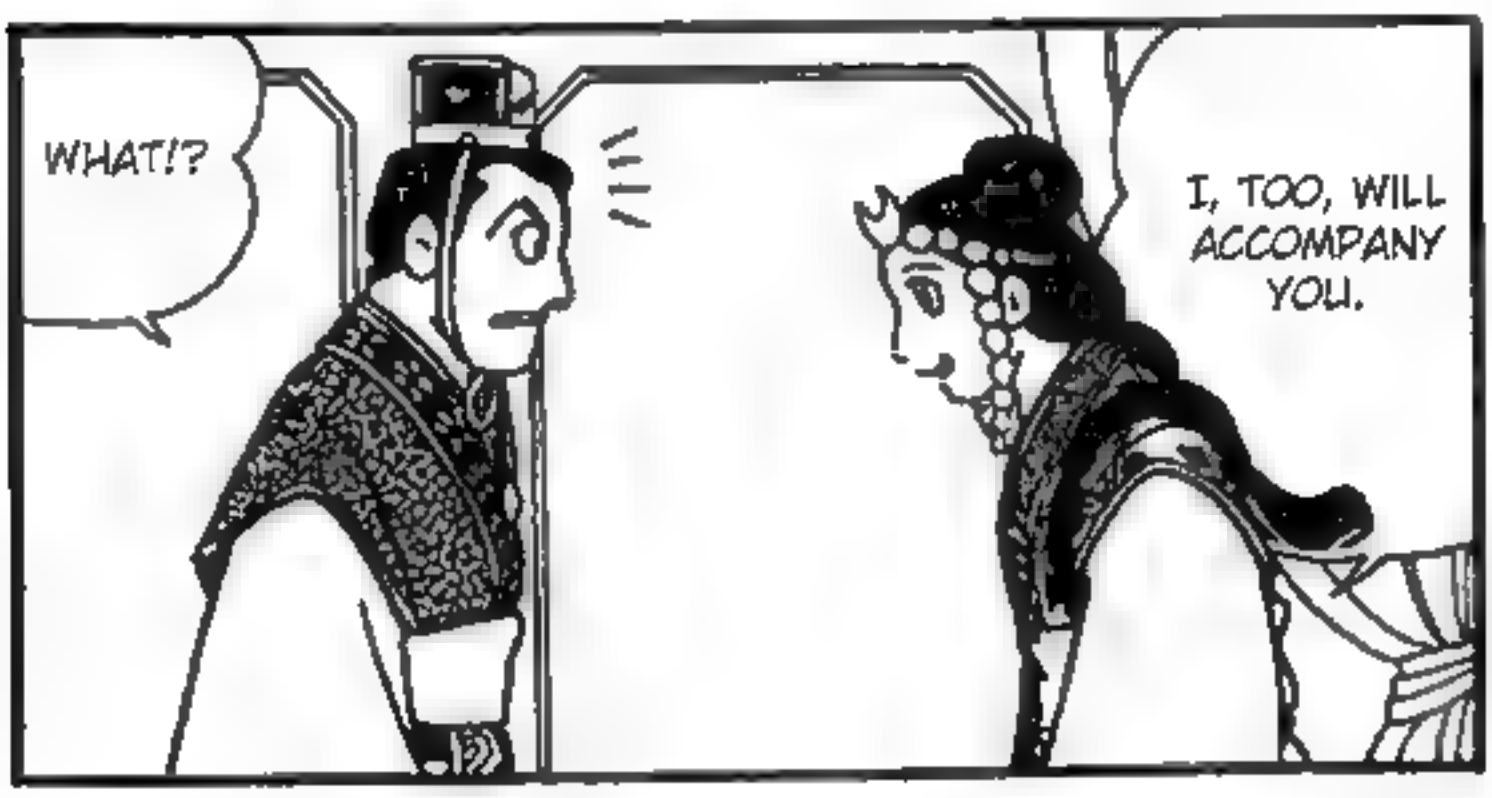
.....

PLEASE LEAVE THE COURT AT ONCE, SIR. HIS MAJESTY COMMANDS IT.

WHAT!

MY FATHER HAS DECIDED TO SURRENDER TO WEI.
WHAT CAUSES SO MUCH PAIN UPON MY PRINCE'S FACE?

BUT I WILL NOT. I WILL JOIN OUR FOUNDER IN THE AFTERLIFE AND SEEK HIS FORGIVENESS.


WHAT!?
I, TOO, WILL ACCOMPANY YOU.

YOU ARE TRULY UPSTAND-ING.

JUST AS YOU CHOOSE TO DIE FOR OUR FOUNDER'S HONOUR, I TOO, CHOOSE TO DIE TO PRESERVE MY HUSBAND'S HONOUR.

WHY WOULD YOU FOLLOW ME?

YES, MOTHER?

CHILDREN, COME GATHER!

FALLEN? DOES THAT MEAN IT WILL DISAPPEAR?

IT PAINS ME TO TELL YOU THAT SHU HAS FALLEN.

SHU WILL BECOME A PART OF WEI?

IT MEANS WEI, THE DESTROYER OF OUR ANCESTRAL HAN DYNASTY, WILL NOW OWN ALL OF SHU AS WELL.

DISHONOUR IS WORSE THAN DEATH FOR A TRUE NOBLE.

YOU WILL DIE TOO, MOTHER?

YOUR FATHER IS TOO ASHAMED TO SEE SHU FALL TO ENEMY HANDS, SO HE CHOOSES TO COMMIT SUICIDE. I, TOO, WILL FOLLOW HIM TO DEATH.

I HOPE YOU WILL GROW TO BE FINE ADULTS EVEN WITHOUT YOUR PARENTS.

YOU WILL DIE WITH US?

ME TOO.

ARE WE CHILDREN NOT NOBLE-BLOODS TOO? I TOO WILL PRESERVE MY HONOUR AND FOLLOW YOU TO DEATH.

I... I TOO WANT TO STAY WITH MOTHER.

OHH...

PLEASE LET US ACCOMPANY YOU TO OUR FOUNDER'S SIDE, FATHER.

YOU TRULY ARE MY SON!

AS LONG AS WE STAY TOGETHER IN DEATH.

THEN YOU WILL DIE WITH ME AS WELL?

AHH!

YES, FATHER...

LET US NOT KEEP YOUR MOTHER WAITING, LEST WE DISGRACE OURSELVES.

YOUR GRANDSON BEGS FORGIVENESS FOR BEING UNABLE TO PREVENT SHU'S FALL, BUT HE WILL AT LEAST JOIN YOUR SIDE WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN!

THE NEXT DAY, LIU SHAN OFFICIALLY SURRENDERED. SHU HAD FALLEN IN ITS SECOND EMPEROR'S 40TH YEAR OF RULE (263 AD). ONLY LIU CHEN'S DEFIANT DEATH LESSENED THE DISGRACE OF THIS MOST HUMILIATING SURRENDER.

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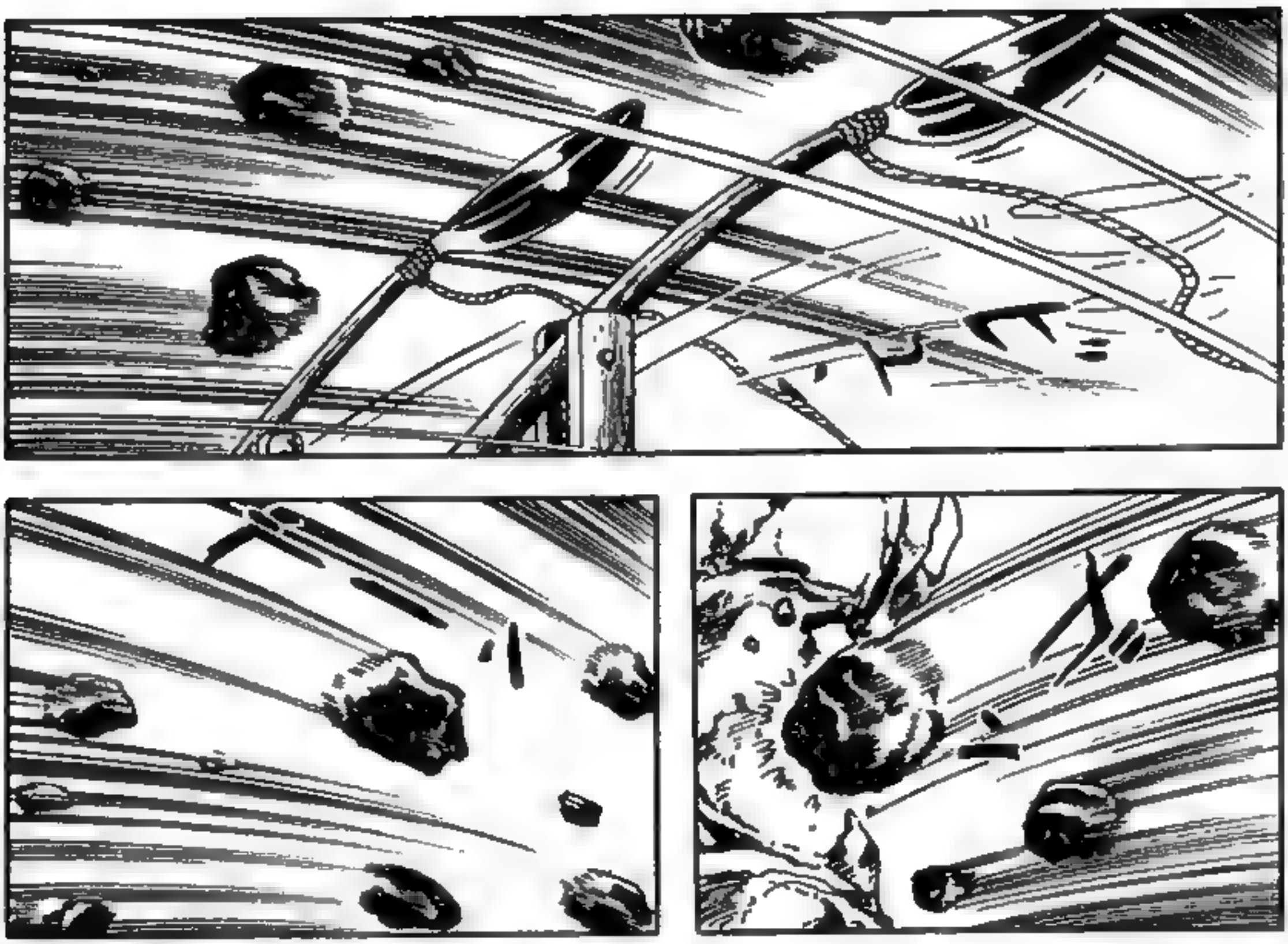
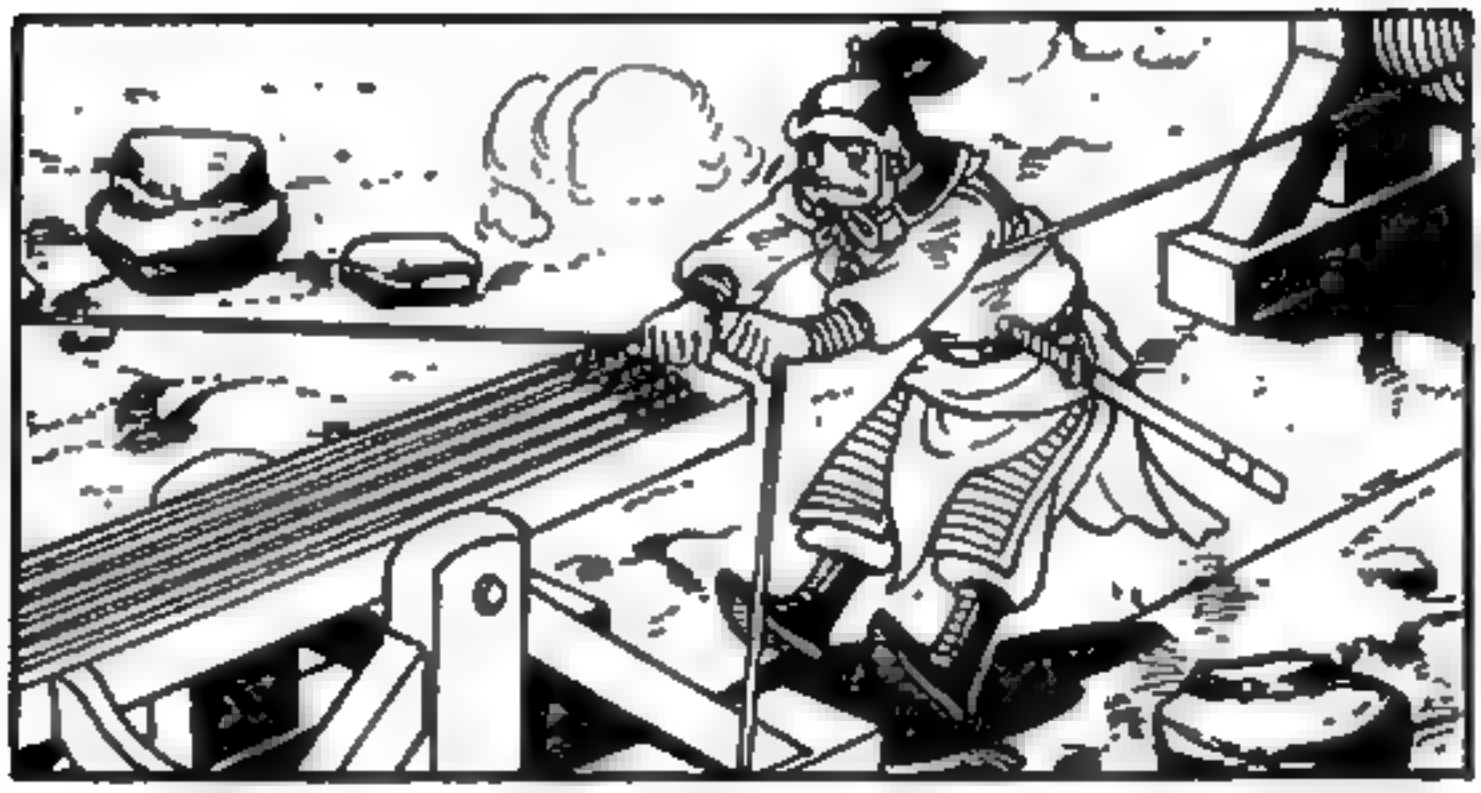
THE FALL OF SHU





RETURN FIRE! RETURN FIRE!

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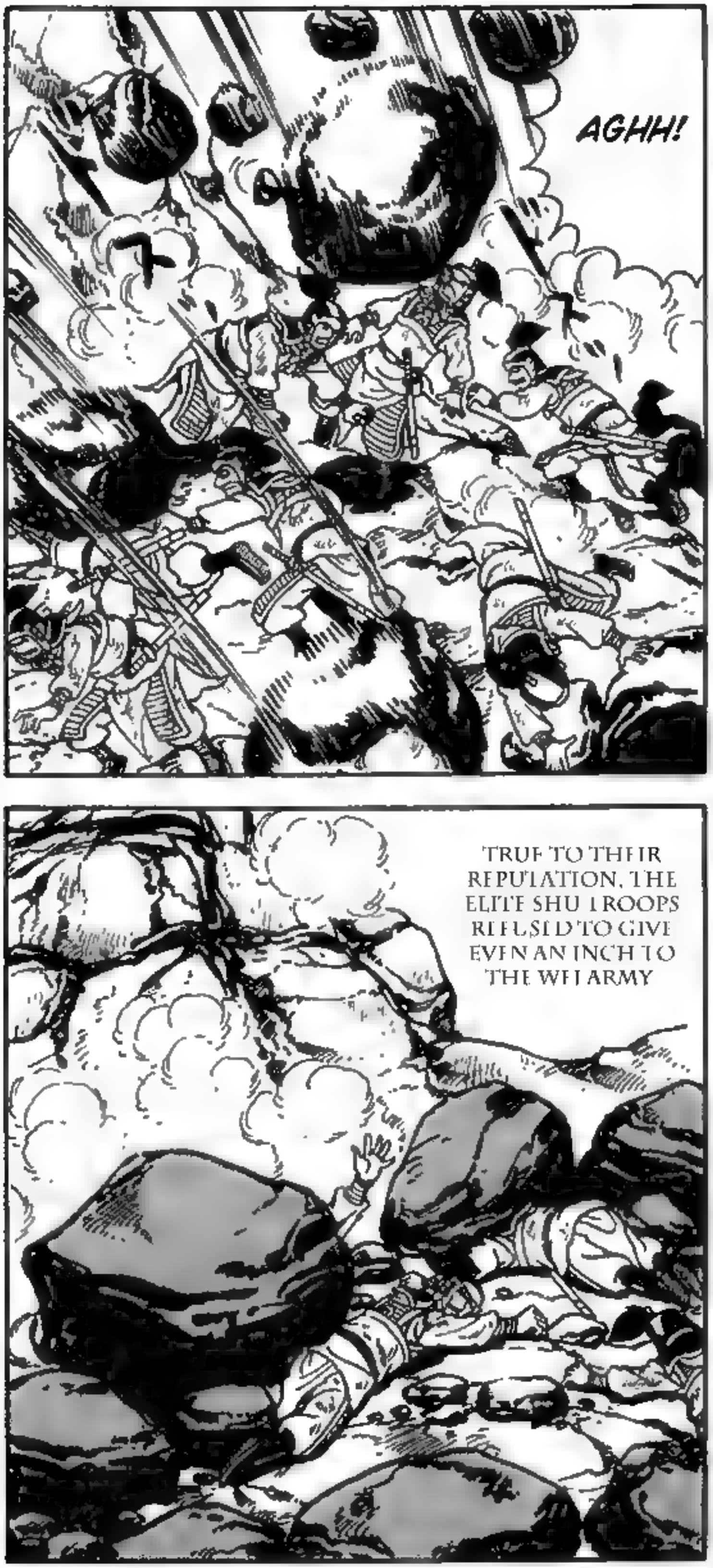
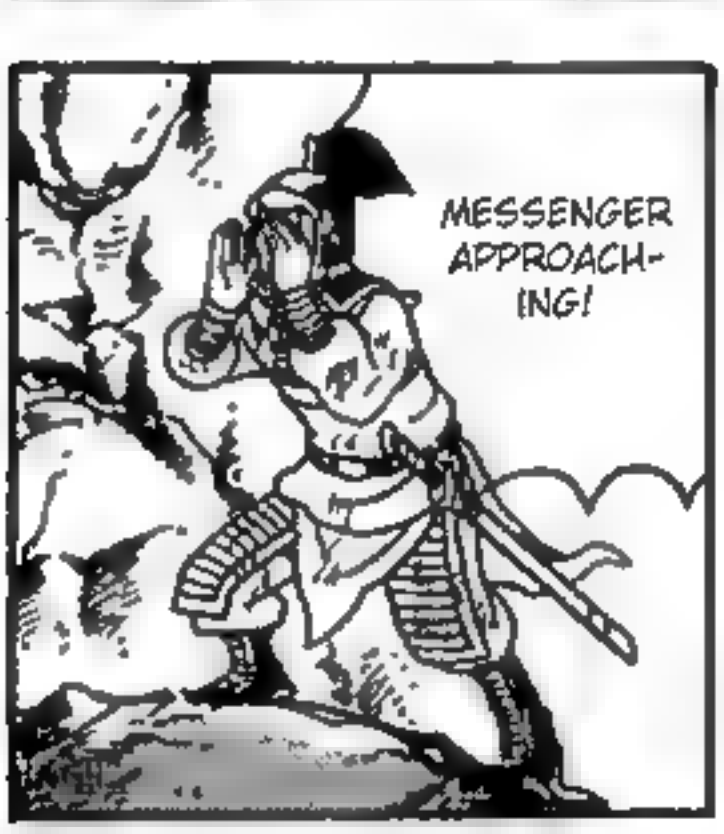
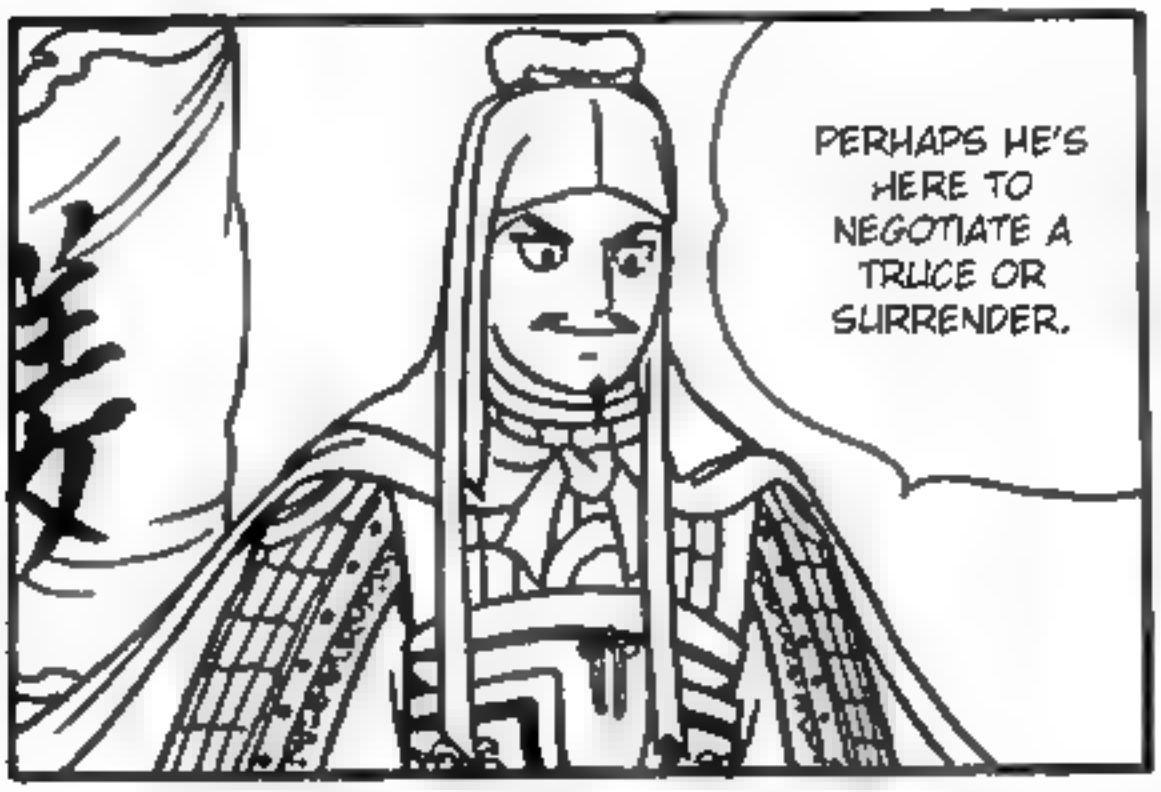

AGHH!
TRUE TO THEIR REPUTATION, THE ELITE SHU TROOPS REFUSED TO GIVE EVEN AN INCH TO THE WEI ARMY

HM?


MESSENGER APPROACH-ING!

HM?


PERHAPS HE'S HERE TO NEGOTIATE A TRUCE OR SURRENDER.

YES, SIR.
LET HIM IN.

I AM JIANG XIAN, SENT HERE BY LIU SHAN!

IDENTIFY YOURSELF!

HIS MAJESTY!?

COME RIGHT UP THIS WAY, SIR!

YES, SIR.
I BRING AN IMPERIAL EDICT.

WHAT!?

HIS MAJESTY LIU SHAN HAS SURRENDERED TO THE WEI ARMY! ALL SHU TROOPS STILL RESISTING IN SABER PASS MUST LAY DOWN ARMS AND SURRENDER AT ONCE!

WHA!

DENG AI'S ARMY MANAGED TO TRAVERSE THROUGH YINPING AND CAPTURE CHENGDU.

美女

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! WE'VE BEEN BLOCKING ALL ENEMY ADVANCE!

ZHUGE ZHAN AND HIS SON FELL IN BATTLE TRYING TO STOP DENG AI'S ARMY.

IT... CAN'T BE...

IF YOU CONTINUE TO RESIST, YOU WILL COMPROMISE HIS MAJESTY AND THE REST OF HIS FAMILY! THROW DOWN YOUR ARMS AND HAND OVER CONTROL OF SABER PASS TO WEI.

VERY WELL.

SHOW ME THAT EDICT!

LEST COMMIT HIGH TREASON TO BOTH WEI AND YOUR FORMER EMPEROR!

IF YOU FINALLY UNDERSTAND THIS EDICT TO BE GENUINE, SURRENDER WITHOUT DELAY,

THE IMPERIAL SEAL!

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I WILL NOW GO INFORM GENERAL ZHONG HUI AT THE WEI CAMP AS WELL.

HOW COULD HIS MAJESTY SURRENDER!? WE COULD HAVE SENT TROOPS BACK TO THE CAPITAL TO SURROUND DENG AI'S ISOLATED ARMY!
WHY, COMMANDER!? WE WERE FIGHTING JUST FINE UP UNTIL A MOMENT AGO!

NO!

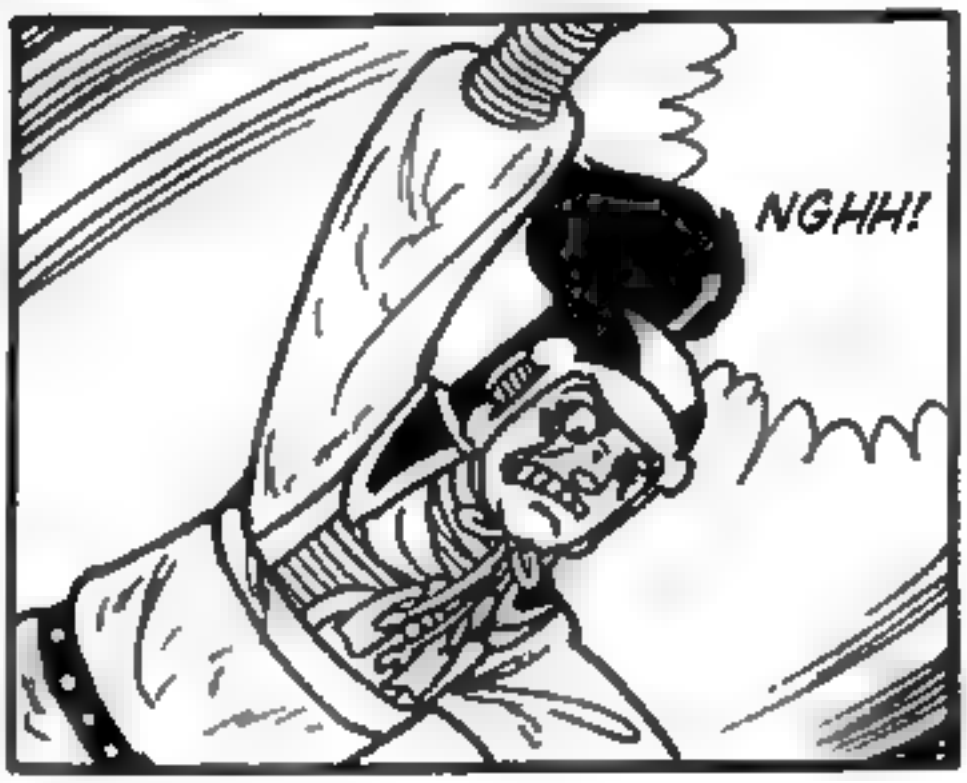
WE CAN CONTINUE TO RESIST THE WEI ARMY HERE!

MY FATHER AND BROTHERS ALL DIED FIGHTING WE!! WERE THEIR DEATHS MEANINGLESS!? JUST WHAT HAVE WE BEEN FIGHTING FOR!?

IF WE RESIST, WE WILL ONLY BRING HARM TO HIS MAJESTY AND HIS PRINCES. MOREOVER, WE WILL BE BRANDED AS TRAITORS, DISHONOURABLE TO BOTH OUR OLD AND NEW MASTERS.

HOW CAN THIS FARCE BE REALITY!

CURSE THIS WORLD!


NGHH!

THE SHU SOLDIERS WEPT AND BROKE THEIR SWORDS AGAINST ROCKS IN FRUSTRATION

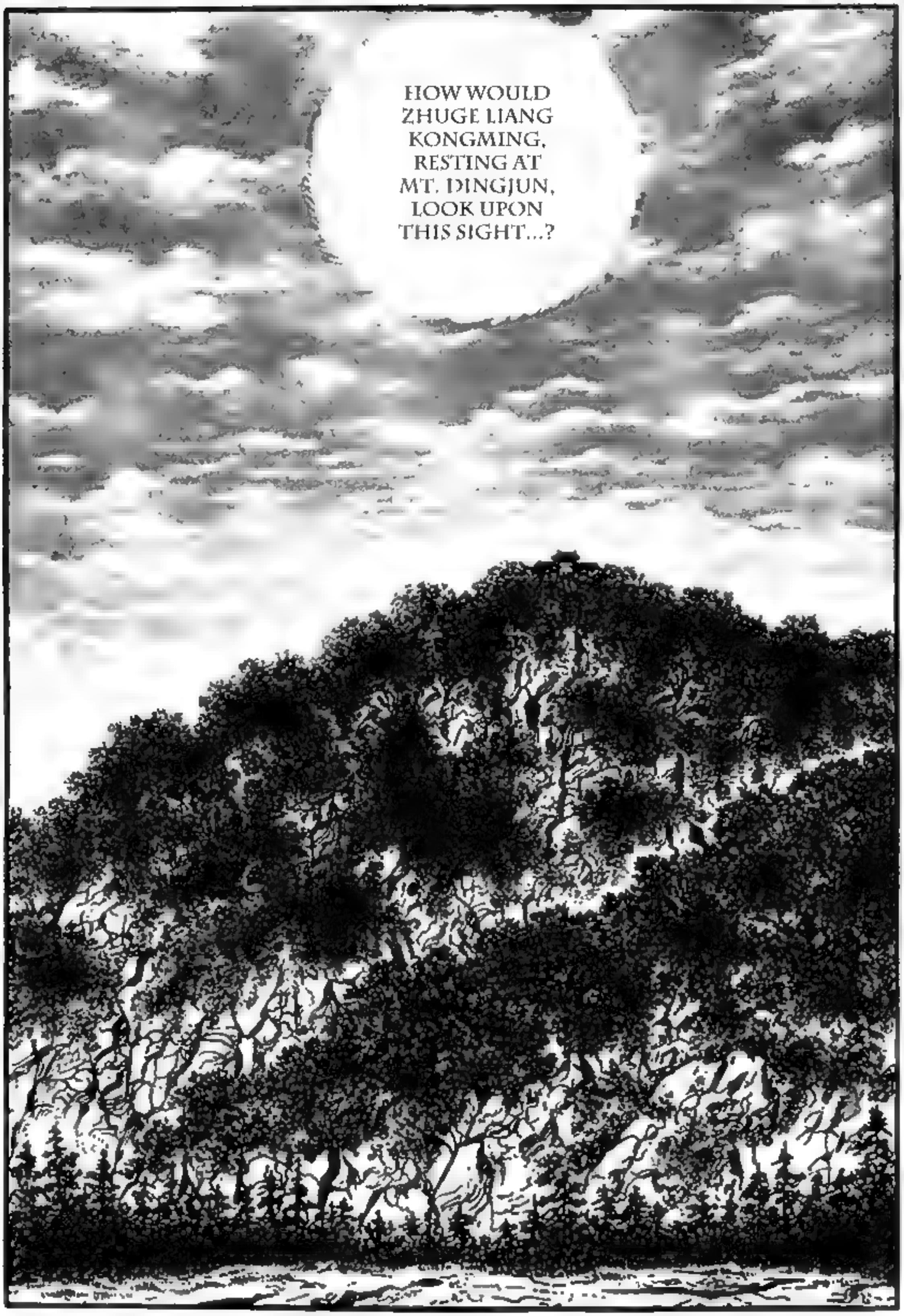
O' CHANCELLOR! IN PASSING, YOU ENTRUSTED THE FATE OF SHU TO ME, YET I HAVE FAILED YOU! NO LONGER CAN I USE THIS SWORD FOR THE SAKE OF SHU!

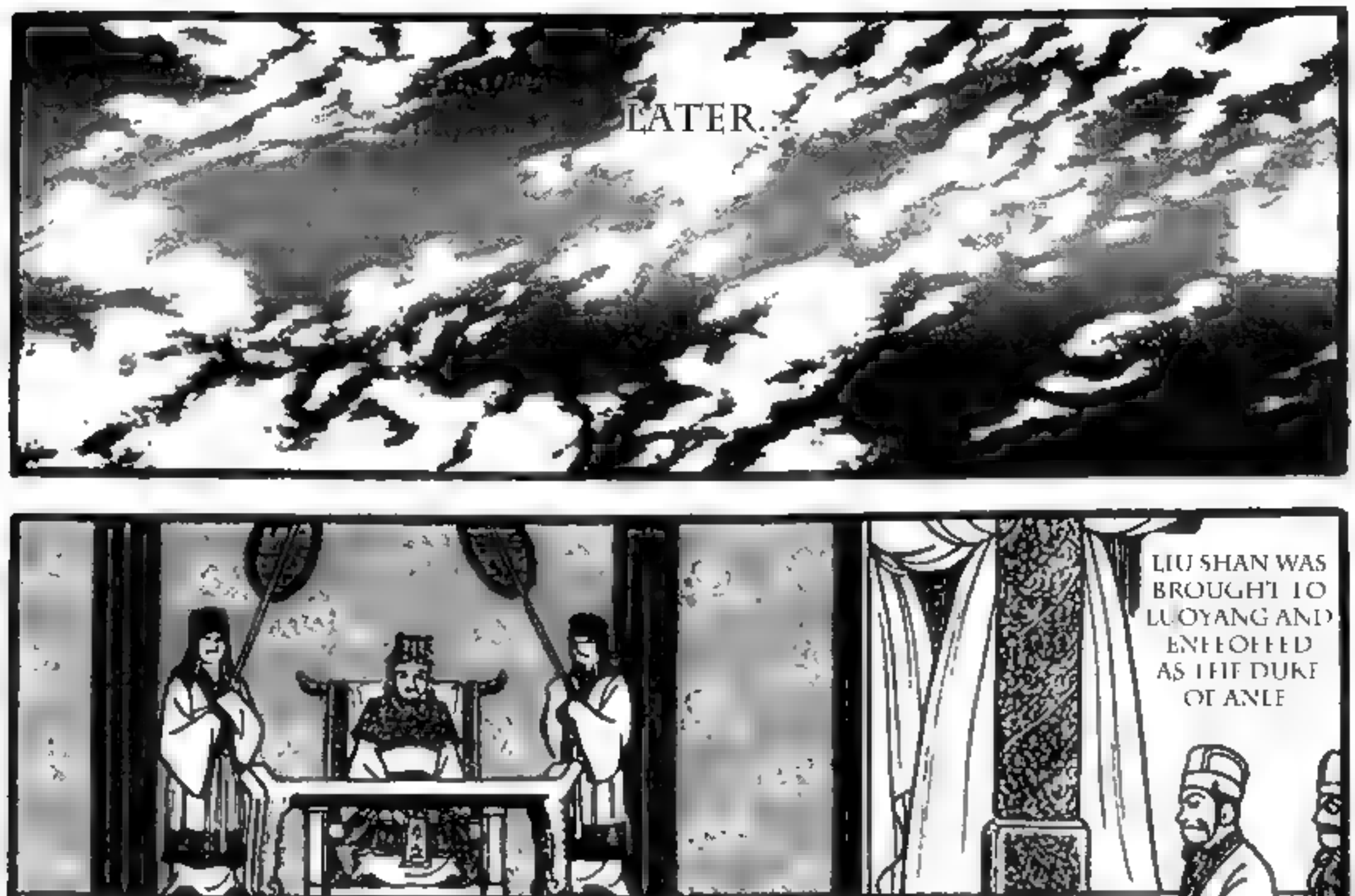
YES, CRY, MY MEN...! LET YOUR TEARS OUT!

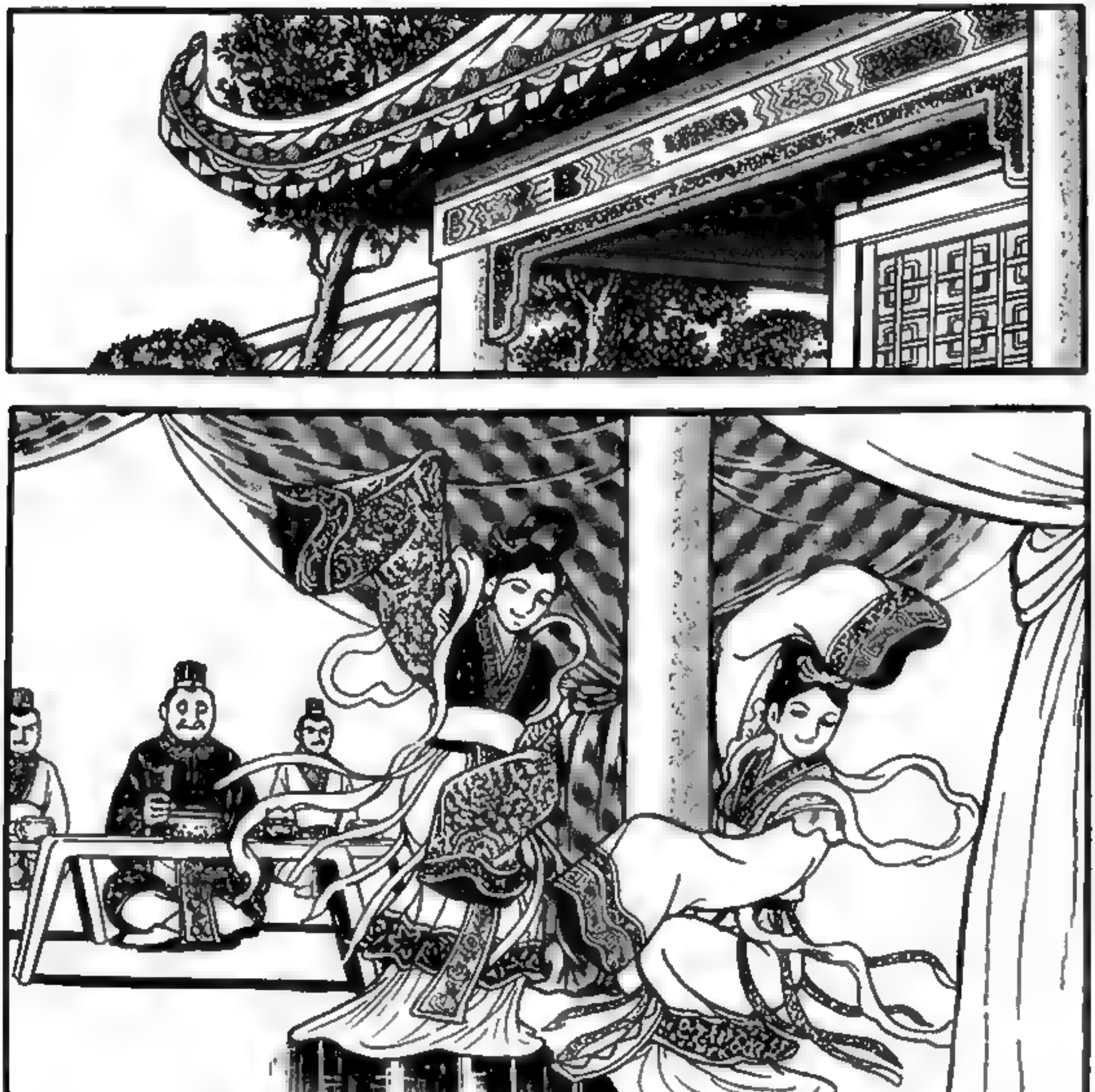
CURSE THIS USELESS SWORD!

UUU...

WITH THAT, THE SHU TROOPS SURREN-DERED SABER PASS AT LAST


HOW WOULD ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING, RESTING AT MT. DINGJUN, LOOK UPON THIS SIGHT...?


LATER...
LIU SHAN WAS BROUGHT TO LUOYANG AND ENFEOFFED AS THE DUKE OF ANLE
HE WAS PROMPTLY EXECUTED
AS FOR HIS CORRUPT EUNUCH HUANG HAO



OH NO, NO. SHU DID NOT EVEN CROSS MY MIND, AS I AM SIMPLY ENJOYING MYSELF TOO MUCH HERE.
DOES THIS TRADITIONAL SHU MUSIC MAKE YOU LONG FOR YOUR HOMELANDS AT ALL, SIR?

AND THE WEI MINISTERS IN ATTENDANCE AT THE BANQUET.

THIS REMARK SHOCKED BOTH LIU SHAN'S RETAINERS.

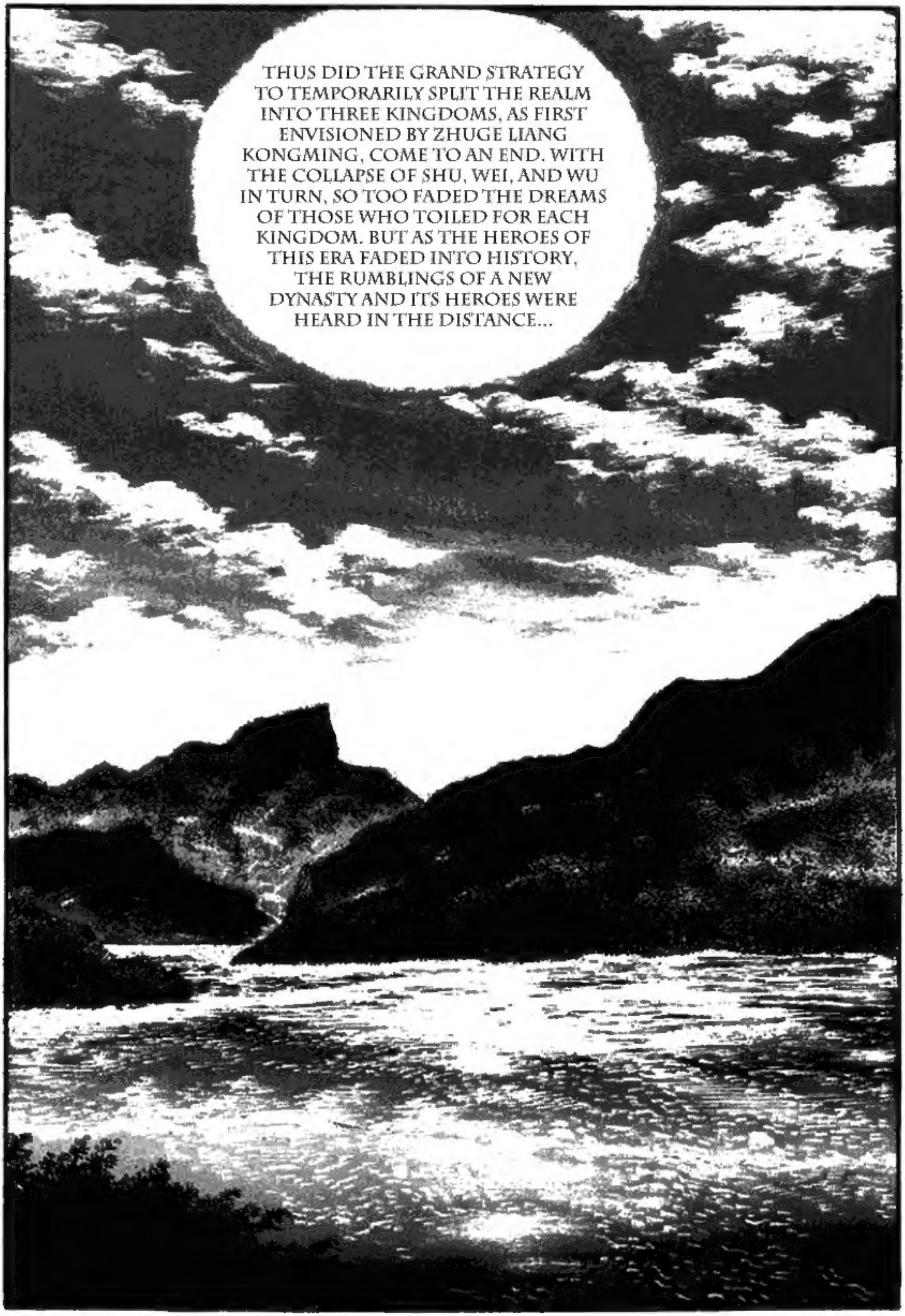
WHAT A FRIVOLOUS MAN... EVEN IF KONGMING WERE ALIVE, HE COULD DO LITTLE TO ALTER SHU'S FATE...

HAHAHA! A DRINK TO PEACE AND GOOD WINE!

YOU SHOULD AT LEAST FEIGN SOME REGRET OUT OF PROPRIETY WHEN ASKED SUCH QUESTIONS.

MY LORD...

WITHOUT HARBOURING THE SLIGHTEST OUNCE OF AMBITION, LIU SHAN LIVED PEACEFULLY AS THE DUKE OF ANLE UNTIL THE RIPE OLD AGE OF 65. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE COUNTLESS SHRINES AND TEMPLES DEDICATED TO THE HEROES OF THE THREE KINGDOMS ERA IN CHINA TODAY, THERE ARE NONE THAT HONOUR LIU SHAN.


THUS DID THE GRAND STRATEGY TO TEMPORARILY SPLIT THE REALM INTO THREE KINGDOMS, AS FIRST ENVISIONED BY ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING, COME TO AN END. WITH THE COLLAPSE OF SHU, WEI, AND WU IN TURN, SO TOO FADED THE DREAMS OF THOSE WHO TOILED FOR EACH KINGDOM. BUT AS THE HEROES OF THIS ERA FADED INTO HISTORY, THE RUMBLINGS OF A NEW DYNASTY AND ITS HEROES WERE HEARD IN THE DISTANCE...

TRANSLATOR'S AFTERWORD

ALTHOUGH I DON'T INTEND TO COMMAND UNWARRANTED SELF-IMPORTANCE AS A MERE FAN-TRANSLATOR,
I DO WISH TO CLEAR UP 3 QUESTIONS MANY READERS MAY HAVE AFTER READING 60 VOLUMES OF SANGOKUSHI.

1. HOW ACCURATE IS SANGOKUSHI TO LUO GUANZHONG'S NOVEL?

I MUST FIRST POINT OUT THAT THERE ARE DOUBTS ABOUT HOW THE "ORIGINAL" NOVEL REALLY WENT. THE 1522 AD EDITION OF "SANGUOZHI TONGSU YANYI" IS THE EARLIEST EXTANT VERSION WRITTEN BY LUO GUANZHONG, BUT AS THIS EDITION COMES NEARLY A CENTURY AFTER LUO SUPPSEDLY WROTE THE TALE, THERE ARE SCHOLARS WHO DISPUTE ITS FAITHFULNESS AND POINT TO OTHER MING-DYNASTY EDITIONS AS BEING CLOSER TO LUO'S ORIGINAL VERSION.

OF COURSE, THIS IS A PEDANTIC POINT, AS NEARLY EVERYBODY WHO TALKS ABOUT ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS IS REFERRING TO MAO LUN & ZONGGANG'S QING-DYNASTY EDITION, WHICH REARRANGED THE STORY AND INSERTED/DELETED SOME EVENTS (THERE IS NO ENGLISH TRANSLATION AVAILABLE FOR THE 1522 AD TONGSU EDITION AS OF 2016).

NOW WITH ALL THIS SAID, YOKOYAMA'S "SANGOKUSHI" IS AN ADAPTATION OF A VERSION WRITTEN BY THE FAMOUS JAPANESE NOVELIST YOSHIKAWA EIJI. YOSHIKAWA'S AND YOKOYAMA'S SANGOKUSHI ARE BOTH HIGHLY FAITHFUL TO THE MAO VERSION (ABOUT 95%, I'D SAY) DESPITE THE VERY DIFFERENT OPENING (LIU BEI NEVER TRIES TO BUY TEA FOR HIS MOTHER IN MAO'S VERSION). INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, THERE ARE A FEW EVENTS WHERE SANGOKUSHI ADAPTS THE TONGSU EDITION INSTEAD. ONE SUCH EXAMPLE IS KONGMING TRYING TO KILL WEI YAN AT GOURD VALLEY ALONG WITH SIMA YI, WHICH WAS OMITTED IN MAO'S VERSION.

IF I HAD TO POINT OUT THE MAJOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MANGA AND THE NOVEL,
IT WOULD BE THAT THE MANGA HAS LESS POEMS AND SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS.

2. WHO UNIFIES CHINA AT THE END?

SANGOKUSHI ADMITTEDLY HAS A TRUNCATED VERSION OF THE ENDING THAT STOPS AT CHAPTER 118 (THE NOVEL HAS 120 CHAPTERS). FURTHERMORE, THE FINAL VOLUME ONLY BRIEFLY MENTIONS JIANG WEI'S NORTHERN CAMPAIGNS AND SIMA CLAN'S USURPATION OF THE WEI THRONE. THUS IF YOU WANT TO SEE WHO UNIFIES CHINA, READ CHAPTERS 119 AND 120 OF THE NOVEL. IF YOU WANT TO READ ALL THE EVENTS BRIEFLY COVERED IN VOLUME 60 OF SANGOKUSHI BUT IN DETAIL, READ CHAPTERS 107-120 OF THE NOVEL.

3. WHICH ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE NOVEL IS BEST?

MOSS ROBERTS' UNABRIDGED TRANSLATION IS WIDELY CONSIDERED THE BEST. IF YOU CANNOT OBTAIN IT, C.H. BREWITT-TAYLOR'S TRANSLATION WILL SERVE (THERE IS AN ONLINE VERSION OF THE BREWITT-TAYLOR AT: THREEKINGDOMS.COM).

I HOPE MY AFTERWORD HAS CLEARED UP ANY QUESTIONS YOU HAD. MY MAJOR REGRET IN WORKING ON SANGOKUSHI, ASIDE FROM THE ROUGHNESS IN TRANSLATION QUALITY EARLY ON, IS THAT I DID NOT HAVE ANY OF THE ORIGINAL COLOUR PAGES. IF YOU WONDERED WHY SOME PAGES AT THE BEGINNING OF CHAPTERS LOOK DARKER THAN NORMAL, THAT IS WHY. IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN READING THE CONTEXT BEHIND YOKOYAMA'S SANGOKUSHI, PLEASE CHECK OUT: HOXTRANSLATIONS.BLOGSPOT.COM/P/SOME-THOUGHTS-ABOUT-GOOD-MANGA.HTML

THANKS AGAIN FOR STICKING WITH ALL 60 VOLUMES!
-HOX-